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JUNE 18 1982

Africa 673-74	Linguistics 669
Art History 675	Literary Criticism 660, 672, 678
Commentary 664-66	Natural History 653-54
English History 670	Poetry 661-62
Fiction 676-77	Religious History 651-52, 679
Germany 668	Social Studies 657, 671
Latin America 656	Transport 663

## INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

ATHA, ANTHONY (Editor) <i>A Scottish Naturalist: The Sketches and Notes of Charles St John 1809-1856</i> [Bruce Urquhart]	654
BAMBARA, TONI CAHO <i>The Salt Eaters</i> [Carol Rumens]	676
BIER, JUSTUS <i>Thimmar Riemenschneider: His Life and Work</i> [Michael Baxandall]	675
CASTEL, ROBERT, and others <i>The Psychiatric Society</i> [G. M. Carstairs]	671
CLARK, J. DESMOND (Editor) <i>The Cambridge History of Africa: Volume 1, From the Earliest Times to c 500 ac</i> [C. Thurstan Shaw]	673-74
COATES, WILLSON H., and others (Editors) <i>The Private Journals of the Long Parliament: 3 January to 5 March 1642</i> [Donald Pennington]	670
COLE, HOWARD C. <i>The All's Well Story from Boccaccio to Shakespeare</i> [Brian Vickers]	678
CONDT, CARL W. <i>The Port of New York: A History of the Rail and Terminal System from the Grand Electrification to the Present</i> [Emrys Jones]	683
CONNOLLY, S. J. <i>Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland 1780-1845</i> [Peter Hebblethwaite]	652
CULLIN, PATRICK, and ROCHA, THOMAS P. <i>Spenser Studies</i> [Henry Woudhuysen]	678
DORRY, WARREN (Editor) <i>The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney: Volume 9, 1815-1817; Volume 10, 1817-1818</i> [Pat Rogers]	680
FLETCHER, ANTHONY <i>The Outbreak of the English Civil War</i> [Valerie Pearl]	670
FOEL, DANIEL MARK <i>Henry James and the Structure of the Romantic Imagination</i> [Stanley Weintraub]	678
FOSTER, JOHN BURT <i>Hells to Dionysus: A Nietzschean Current in Literary Modernism</i> [David Trotter]	672
FRANKS, ALAN <i>Boychester's Bugle</i> [J. K. L. Walker]	677
GATES, ELIZABETH M. <i>End of the Affair: The Collapse of the Anglo-French Alliance, 1939-40</i> [François Kersaudy]	656
GEORGE, WILMA <i>Darwin</i> [Redmond O'Hanlon]	653-54
GREEN, ROGER (Editor) <i>The Train</i> [Peter Parker]	663
HAMANN, BRIGITTE <i>Elizabeth, Kaiserin wider Willen</i> [Norman Stone]	668
HENNINGWAY, AMANDA <i>Psyche</i> [David Montrose]	677
HOWARD, JONATHAN <i>Darwin</i> [Redmond O'Hanlon]	653-54
HUMPHREYS, R. A. <i>Latin America and the Second World War: Volume One 1939-1942</i> [Laurence Whitehead]	656
INNIS, ROBERT E. <i>Karl Bühler: Semiotic Foundations of Language Theory</i> [Roy Harris]	669
JOHNSTON, WILLIAM <i>The Mirror Mind: Spirituality and Transformation</i> [Grace Jantzen]	679
LEACH, CHRISTOPHER <i>A Killing Frost</i> [T. O. Treadwell]	677
LA GOFF, JACQUES <i>La Naissance du Purgatoire</i> [R. W. Southern]	651-52
NOUDI WA THIONO <i>Devil on the Cross</i> [David Sweetman]	676
NOLAN, CHRISTOPHER <i>Dam-Burst of Dreams</i> [Pat Raine]	671
PORTER, CAROLYN <i>Seeing and Being: The Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams and Faulkner</i> [Lachlan Mackinnon]	678
REAONO, PETER <i>Tom o'Bedlam's Beauties</i> [Grevel Lindop]	662
ROHL, JOHN C. G., and SOMBAK, NICOLAUS (Editors) <i>Kaiser Wilhelm II: New Interpretations</i> [Michael Balfour]	668
RYAN, DAVID STUART <i>Looking for Kathmandu</i> [Michael Trend]	676
SCHWARTZ, MARIAN <i>Realities</i> [Alannah Hopkin]	676
SINCHIST, MARK <i>Rough in Brutal Print: The Legal Sources of Browning's Red Cotton Night-Cap Country</i> [Daniel Karlin]	678
STEER, JOHN <i>Alvise Vivarini: His Art and Influence</i> [Charles Hope]	675
WALKER, ALICE <i>Meridian. You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down</i> [Carol Rumens]	676
WESS, TOOR <i>From Custom to Capital: The English Novel and the Industrial Revolution</i> [Richard Brown]	660
YOUNG, MICHAEL <i>The Elmhursts of Dartington: The Creation of an Utopian Community</i> [Alan Ryan]	657

### COMMENTARY

Cinema	<i>The German Sisters</i> (Academy One Cinema)	[Helen McNell]
Opera	<i>Arnold</i> (Christ Church, Spitalfields)	[Michael Tanner]
Television	<i>Prost in May</i> (BBC-TV)	[Paisley Craig]
Theatre	<i>Theatertreffen</i> (Berlin)	[Ronald Hayman]
Behind the lines	[Robert Hewison]	

*The Individual and his Times* [Roy Fuller]

*Letters on Counter-tenors, St Mark's Horses, Public Lending Right*  
Poems by Kevin Crossley-Holland, Frank Ormsby, Rodney Pybus, C. H. Sisson  
Author: Anthony  
Fifty years on

676, 677, 653, 652  
666  
679

## Between Heaven and Hell

R. W. Southern

JACQUES LE GOFF  
La Naissance du Purgatoire  
500pp. Paris: Gallimard.

The publication of Jacques le Goff's study of Purgatory is an important event, not only in itself but as a portent and a promise of things to come. Traditionally, text-books of Catholic theology and books of theological controversy have been the places to look for discussion of this subject. And these books naturally treat it either as the unfolding of a doctrine implicit in a dozen or so Biblical texts, or as a deviation from Biblical teaching, prompted by avarice, ambition, or other unworthy motives. Le Goff will have nothing to do with this closed world of theological discussion. His aim is to write the history of the doctrine in its social, economic and intellectual setting, and this is surely the right approach for a historian.

Nearly all important theological developments are brought about by pressures, social or otherwise, from outside the theological system, and the doctrine of Purgatory is no exception. It is one of the small handful of concepts, largely derived from the Bible, which have radically influenced the behaviour of large numbers of European people over several centuries. The concepts of society and kingship are other members of this privileged group; but, important though they are, their influence on the daily lives of the population has never been as widespread or as obessional as the idea of Purgatory. And, quite apart from its influence on daily habits, it played an important part in lifting the cloud of uncertainty and gloom about the after-life which lay over the early centuries of European history. It made possible a more relaxed attitude to this world and the next: it turned the straight and narrow way of salvation into a highway trodden by a multitude of feet.

The subject lies at the centre of the revival of Europe in the twelfth century, and it is a very welcome event to have a historian who has made a notable contribution to the social and economic history of this period. Le Goff defines the areas of his main interest as 'les rapports entre croyance et société', 'les structures mentales', and 'la place de l'imagination dans l'histoire'. He confesses to being no theologian, but



"Skeletons and Flayed Men", an engraving by Domenico del Barbiere (1506-1565) which is included in a sale of "Important Old Master Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts" in Sotheby's, New Bond Street, London W1 on June 18. Barbiere was a member of the School of Fontainebleau which numbered other Italian artists, such as Rosso and Primaticcio, who had been brought to France by Francis I.

hopes to do justice to the theological content of the problem. I shall later express some doubts about his success in fulfilling this hope, but in providing sketches of a long succession of theologians no one could be more conscientious. My reservations are concerned rather with his attitude to theology as a self-consistent body of knowledge.

The work is divided into three parts, each of which is of roughly similar length: "Avant le Purgatoire", "Naissance du Purgatoire", "Le triomphe du Purgatoire". The precise titles, as we shall see, are important for le Goff's interpretation of his subject.

The first part takes the story from its remotest origins to the end of the thirteenth century. So far as Western Europe is concerned, this was, in le Goff's view, a period when Purgatory did not exist. On this point he is sternly insistent, and he deals some pretty hard knocks to those who have been

foolish enough to mention Purgatory in this period. The extent to which he is right on this point will need further enquiry. It was certain that some kind of purgatorial process existed for some souls for minor sins - so much seemed to be clear from St Paul's words about a man's works in wood, hay and stubble being burnt, while the man himself is saved. But which souls and what sins were thus capable of being purged were all in doubt. It was only safe to say that purgation was for the few, probably mainly monks who had been guilty of minor lapses. For ordinary mortals the choice lay starkly open between Heaven and Hell, with the strong likelihood of the latter.

The second section of the book deals with the twelfth century and the birth of Purgatory. And it may be said at once that le Goff is here at his most vigorous and brilliant. He has some extraordinarily good pages on individual theologians of the period, and he catches its theological spirit in a phrase which, though he applies it to Peter Lombard alone, could even more appropriately describe the whole generation of theologians in the early twelfth century whose work was summed up by the Lombard: "il s'esquise un regroupement vers le centre".

Unfortunately, as it seems to me, le Goff does not place the main weight of his argument at this point. He reserves the birth of Purgatory almost to the end of the century, and his main reason for doing this is that the word Purgatory did not exist before this date. It is an essential part of his method that he attaches immense importance to the appearance of the word: "je suis nominaliste et je crois à la signification capitale des changements de vocabulaire". In one way or another this principle reiterated many times, and deeply affects his treatment of Purgatory. "Il n'y a pas de Purgatoire

avant 1170 au plus tôt." How do we know? Because the word did not exist before this date. "Un lieu innommé n'existe pas tout à fait." Before the word, "Purgatoire est encore à naître", "entre 1171 (et 1200), le mot purgatoire - et donc le lieu - est né"; purgatory is "essentiellement lié à sa localisation"; "la naissance du Purgatoire est un phénomène du tournant du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle." The list of such emphatic statements could be prolonged, but these will suffice. They express the central idea of the book, and they reflect an important strain in le Goff's thinking, not only about Purgatory, but about the way history should be written, and about the shape of medieval history as a whole.

Now, we can certainly agree that inventions of new words are important historical events, and that such events have too often been neglected by historians. But it is quite doubtful whether they have the significance which le Goff attaches to them. At least in this case, I am not convinced that anything new came into existence with the new word. Certainly not a new localization of Purgatory, for nothing could be more clearly localized than the fire (not the fire of Hell), which the Northumbrian monk, Dryden saw in his visionary experience in the seventh century. And even when the new word came into existence, we find almost at once that it had several different meanings, some localized, others not; and the most localized of them, St Patrick's Purgatory (perhaps the first example of the word known to us), was of a very special kind, a sort of private purgatory in Ireland, to which pilgrims could go to be purged of their sins in their lifetime. The word did not bring consistency of meaning. But above all, it did not bring classification of the role of the purgatorial process in human life: that had already been achieved while theologians still had to make do with a variety of phrases such as *ignis purgatorius*, *pœnne purgatorie*, *locus purgatorius*, etc.

What purpose, then, did the new word serve? The answer is, simply, convenience. The reason why it appeared when it did was probably no more than this: the subject was so often talked about that it was convenient to have a handy coin that had previously existed for the purposes of communication. Gold coins took the place of many silver pennies in the next century for the same reason. If we are looking at language for signs of a

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conceptual break-through, we might better look for it in the increasing use of the adjective *purgatorial* a hundred years earlier.

I have already suggested that the Goff's exaggerated respect for the noun *Purgatory* leads him to postpone the dating of the moment of change almost to the end of the twelfth century. This has very important consequences from several points of view. It leads him to see *high* where there is growth, and to place the moment of growth too late. He puts the "spring-time" of scholasticism in the late twelfth century, and despite all the excellent things he says about early twelfth-century theologians, his new chronology leads him to moderate their importance. It was they who first succeeded in enlarging the very narrow scope of the purgatorial process in the older theology, and provided hope for ordinary sinners. Lombard, who died in 1160, was the last great theologian of this formative period and his account of the role of Purgatory is of the highest importance. After quoting the old authorities about the minor sins which were amenable to purgatorial treatment, he goes on to declare that may sin (only repeated) is remitted by purgatorial pains after death, and that minor (venial) sins are purged even if they have not been repeated.

This was the new idea of Purgatory as it affected the lives of ordinary people. It was to have immense elaborations of practice which led to the course of the next three hundred years, but the central message was already there: any reasonably repentant, reasonably obedient, sinner could hope to go to Heaven via Purgatory. The purgatorial process was on its way to becoming an extension of the religious discipline of this world, rather than an upper crust of Hell; or, rather, given the accumulative tendencies of scholastic thought, it became *both* like this world in function, and like Hell in imagination.

This was not a change which took place in isolation. It was part of the complete recasting of the religious discipline of life for everyone in Western Christendom from top to bottom, and in every area of life in definitions of doctrine, in enforcement of social disciplines, in payments of tithes, in requirements of confessions and penance. All this was brought about gradually under the management of a greatly enlarged clerical class, but the intellectual foundations were virtually complete by the middle of the twelfth century.

Le Goff places the essential change in the idea of Purgatory nearly fifty

years later than this. Necessarily, this late date affects his account of "les rapports entre croyance et société", on the importance of which we are both agreed. In its barest outline my account would go like this. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the Church was wholly dependent for its existence and prosperity in Western Europe on the great military and political families who had adopted Christianity and imposed it on their peoples. These great families relied for their hopes of salvation and for success in this life on massive benefactions to monastic communities engaged in permanent prayer and penitential exercise, and on other expedients such as (at first) delayed baptism and (later) late monastic vows. It was in this extraordinary rigour which held out hopes of Heaven to those who could pay a very high price for vicarious penances in this world.

The basis for this system began to change rapidly in the eleventh century with the growth of productivity and population. These changes created new opportunities of government and social organization. More particularly, they brought the Church a major new source of income in tithes, which gradually came to exceed its revenue from every other source. This was a major factor in changing the pastoral aims of the Church. It was no longer dependent on the huge benefactions and goodwill of the top aristocracy, but

increasingly dependent on, and concerned with, the goodwill and co-operation of the whole population. The new income brought into existence a large body of parochial clergy, and (when these had been somewhat meagrely provided for) it still left a huge surplus for intellectual enterprise, as well as for large-scale organization. It was out of this surplus that the new effort towards theological definition and practical discipline was financed. This effort had, as its main purpose, the creation of a workable system of religious discipline for everyone. The enlarged role of Purgatory was a small part of this system. It would be cynical to say that this new role was necessary to obtain the co-operation of the new mass of people effected by the new disciplines and regulations, but it is perfectly true that new disciplines cannot be imposed unless there are rewards at the end of the day. The huge penances of the past which only the very wealthy could work off by the employment of vicarious penitents, would simply not work for the mass of the population. Besides being socially insupportable, they were clearly unjust and rationally absurd. The great strength of the new disciplines was that they could be followed without disrupting the ordinary processes of life. But could they suffice, if kept with reasonable fidelity, for salvation?

It was at this point that the hitherto

## A Purgatory

Old people, hemming  
Across the table  
Their mutual disengagements  
As they are able.

One says: 'Lay them out there,  
The bulbs.' The other  
Objects, there is nothing else to object to  
And there must be bother.

Seventy creeps on to eighty;  
Half-blind eyes  
Round the kitchen table, shielded from the north wind  
And the open skies.

Stepping backward over the rubble  
Of enough years, battles, importances  
The meadow has gone, the quarrel remains  
To the last cornale.

C. H. Sisson

## Clerics in control

Peter Hebblethwaite

S. J. CONNOLLY  
Priests and People in Pre-Famine  
Ireland 1760-1845  
338pp. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan,  
1977.  
0 312 64411 6.

The history of Ireland is bedevilled by contrary myths. In Catholic pulp rhetoric, Ireland "was once an island of saints" where priest and people shared a common social origin and a sense of oppression. The Protestant counter-story has been that Ireland was dominated by priests who imposed their repressed sexuality on the people and encouraged them in "pseudo-patriotic" acts of violence. There is now a new generation of Irish historians who can look more coolly at their past. Among them is S. J. Connolly. Though not the recording angel, he has been what is possibly the next best thing for a historian: an archivist in the Public Record Office in Dublin.

It has become commonplace to make a sharp distinction between pre and post-famine Ireland. The hungry Forties so disrupted society that Ireland had to make a fresh start. The Church, as the most important Irish institution to have survived the famine intact, played a vital part in this reconstruction of society. At the same time it introduced "new forms of ultrarationalism" which had not been known in Ireland before. Many of the

features that appear characteristic of Irish Catholicism today — such as devotion to the Sacred Heart — were mid-nineteenth-century innovations.

Connolly is not directly concerned with the question of continuity or difference. His study is confined to the pre-famine period. But obviously any period involves comparisons with what came later. He is particularly scrupulous in his handling of evidence, and very reluctant to generalize. In this he differs from William Kinella, Catholic Bishop of Ossory, who told the Irish "have the virtues dear to God, but they are ignorant, violent, intemperate, and as incapable of resisting the first impulse as savages".

Connolly produces some evidence to support the Bishop's harsh judgment. But that is not why he quotes it. The interest of his remark is that it shows that Bishop Kinella felt that the Church had to struggle to impose its values on the people. The clergy were the agents and the people were the object in a process of evangelization. And the clergy were not proving very successful. "Popular beliefs (in fairies, witchcraft, magical healing charms, omens, protective rituals and calendar customs) proved hard to eradicate." The religion of the Catholics, writes Connolly, "cannot be understood simply as an inferior version of the religion of their social superiors." It had a certain autonomy, a moralism and capacity for survival. It was what the clergy had to contend with.

In one area they appeared to be successful. The clergy in pre-famine Ireland preached a strict sexual morality. Imposed discipline by punishing offenders, and endeavoured to remove "the occasions of sin". The priest patrolling the country ready, in spring, his shillelagh at the ready, is a fiction. It worked. Pre-nuptial pregnancy and illegitimacy were lower in Ireland than in the rest of the clergy, for in these matters they merely endorsed the already existing attitudes of Irish society. Bishop Kinella, indeed, thought they went too far, and regretted that "a woman who is suspected is lost for her whole life". He also thought the treatment extended to innocent bastards was unjust. The decisive factor in pre-famine Ireland was not what the clergy preached: it was the fact that the pre-famine farmers and smallholders had to run a delicately balanced family economy which could easily be upset by an unplanned marriage or the pregnancy of an unmarried daughter. But the clergy also denounced drinking, but since it was socially acceptable, they were not effective.

The clergy were also unsuccessful in restraining the violence endemic in Irish society. But they certainly tried. There was much preaching on the need for "public order" and the weapon of "civilized order" was often used against offenders in the eighteenth century. But "disorder" was of two kinds. There were brawls and feuds

that could involve whole families or villages. Here the priests sometimes intervened as mediators and imposed fierce public penances — three times round the church on bare knees, for example. Political dissent and the violence to which it led ("vile and even more vicious" were denounced the French Revolution had shown what could happen when the floodgates of equality were opened. "Where", asked a pastoral letter in 1798, "shall you find tithers, if all become gentlemen?"

The priests of this period were mostly "loyalists", in Dr Ian Paisley's phrase. They upheld the authority of the British crown and prayed for the King. Their motive was twofold. First, they took St Paul's injunctions to obey temporal rule with the utmost seriousness. Second, they hoped that good behaviour would be rewarded by growing tolerance (and they were not mistaken in this hope). In their some classic texts on alienation which would have delighted Karl Marx. Bishop Moylan of Cork exhorted his flock: "Instead of seeking by unlawful methods to soften the hardships of your condition, console yourselves, my dear brethren, with the assurance your religion holds out to you that whatever you suffer in this world, it will be not your own fault, shall be amply rewarded in the next." In some places priests acted as informers and mobilized their "respectable" parishioners in support of law and order.

This was by no means universal.

however, and there were differences between the bishops and the lower clergy on these questions. Connolly concludes that although the Irish society to eliminate violence from Irish society, the violence would have been far worse had they not been there. In any case the clerical role was changing. In the 1830s, while violence and conspiracies continued to be denounced from the pulpit, priests began to work for peaceful political change and acted openly as agents for O'Connell's political machine. A Cork priest wrote in 1834: "The country priest now copes with the county acquire, keeps sporting dogs, controls elections, presides at political clubs and sits cheek by jowl at public dinners with peers of the land and members of parliament." But all this was within the context of an unchallenged United Kingdom.

The most surprising fact to emerge from Connolly's admirably patient and thorough study is that pre-famine Ireland, far from being "priest-ridden", imagined there was a priest shortage. In 1800 the number of Catholics per priest or curate was 2,670. On the eve of the famine in 1840 it was 2,996. This may seem a generous provisioning of clergy. But one has to remember that, as Connolly remarks, since Irish religion was very ritualistic, it was therefore extremely labour-intensive. By 1871 there was one priest for 1,560 parishioners. This improved ratio was no doubt the condition of the imposition of clerical control in the reconstituted post-famine Church. Order replaced comparative anarchy.

## The evolution of evolution

Redmond O'Hanlon

JONATHAN HOWARD

Darwin  
102pp. Oxford University Press.  
£1.25.  
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WILMA GEORGE

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160pp. Fontana. £1.75.  
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Marking the centenary of Darwin's death, Jonathan Howard has produced an intellectual tour de force, a classic in the genre of popular scientific exposition which will still be read in fifty years' time. Wilma George, on the other hand, author of the best biography of the co-discoverer of evolution by natural selection yet written, *Biologist Philosopher: a Study of the Life and Writings of Alfred Russel Wallace* (1964) and, more recently, *Gregor Mendel and his more detailed domestic, semi-biographical study, an uneven but indispensable book which sometimes reads like a synopsis for the definitive Darwin biography which she is uniquely qualified to attempt, and whose style sometimes resembles the characteristic course of the gundi (one of her research specialties) amongst the Saharan desert rocks: it moves in short bursts at tremendous speeds from one point of interest to another, and can be exceedingly difficult to follow.*

Wilma George obviously feels constrained by the Modern Masters series format, and no wonder. As Jonathan Howard remarks, himself writing to the even tighter specifications required of Oxford's *Great Masters*: "Darwin's biographers are faced with an embarrassment of riches. His parents were both children of distinguished families that have earned biographical attention in their own right. Darwin then married his first cousin, and the family seems to have thrown practically nothing away ever since. . . . The notes and records of a whole lifetime's scientific work have been maintained virtually intact." Five volumes of his letters were edited by his son Francis (and a new edition of more than 13,000 letters, edited by David Kohn, is due to begin to emerge from Cambridge early next year); many of his correspondents were scientists of great distinction and their own letters to Darwin in turn survive, leaving "an abundance of relatively complete documentary record of the life of one of the great revolutionaries in the history of ideas".

Howard solves the problem by sidestepping it altogether, and concentrating instead on Darwin's "overwhelming importance . . . for the development of biological thought". Darwin's childhood and schooldays in Shrewsbury; his abortive attempt at Edinburgh University to follow his father into medicine; his studies for the Anglican priesthood at Cambridge; his selection, at a mere twenty-two, as gentleman naturalist to HMS Beagle on her 1831-1836 circumnavigation of the globe ("The voyage of the Beagle has been by far the most important event in my life and has determined my whole career. . ."); his happy marriage, his unhappy health, and his retirement into the massively productive isolation of Down House in Kent, visited only by a chosen handful of the best scientists of the day: these are all disposed of in eight pages.

The summary, like the rest of the argument, is brisk but never breathless; and Howard unerringly highlights the right moments in Darwin's life, like the *autumn mirabilis*, for instance, from 1837 to 1839, when he "produced the complete theory of evolution in about 900 pages of private notes written to his spare time. All the main issues which occupied him for the rest of his life were dealt with piecemeal in a torrent of creative insight of extraordinary intensity."

With a clarity and pace which he might well have learned from his acknowledged mentor, P. B. Medawar, Howard then proceeds to trace the origins and map the changing fortunes of these main issues. By the

beginning of the eighteenth century, he tells us, "Anglican orthodox opinion had virtually abandoned revelation in favour of the conformity of nature to man's needs as the primary source of evidence for the existence and attributes of God"; and by 1836, the year of Darwin's return from his great voyage, the clever and influential Cambridge philosopher of science, William Whewell, could still consider "the whole mass of the Earth from pole to pole, and from circumference to centre as employed in keeping a snowdrift in the position most suited to the promotion of its vegetable health".

Natural Theology sanctioned the intense study of the adaptations of animals and plants to each other and to their surroundings, and William Paley's *Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity collected from the Appearances of Nature* (1802) gave Darwin more pleasure than any other part of his Cambridge syllabus. It was an important influence: concentrate on the Evidence, remove the Theology, disconnect the hand of God from its intricate workings in the countryside, and natural selection is almost revealed.

Natural Theology was a counsel of optimism, an invitation to contemplate the precisely attuned delights of the butterfly cabinet and the Rectory orchard, and much of its protective intellectual effort was devoted to the exclusion of the unpleasant problem of the existence of evil from its mental Garden of Eden, set in the English shires; there must have been a higher and less evident purpose in the mind of Paley's Great Designer when he created earthquakes, floods, famines and tapeworms; and the Anglican cleric Thomas Malthus's *Essay on Population* (1798) appeared to provide some kind of empirical justification for such suffering in nature — population increase in a geometrical progression, by leaps and bounds, which, unchecked, would soon outrun the limited resources of the world. Struggle and disaster maintain the *Providence status quo*. It was this generalization, taken entirely out of its original context in 1838, which supplied Darwin with the idea of the struggle for existence.

By combining such simple enlightenment with the concept of evolution itself, which reached him from his brilliant grandfather Erasmus, and from Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809) filtered through the disappointing pages of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, Darwin discovered himself to be in possession of a tough new world of his own imagining — which nevertheless seemed to make clear patterns and sensible interrelations amongst all the multitudinous particulars of natural history which he had so delightfully collected since boyhood.

In looking at Nature, it is most necessary . . . never to forget that

every single organic being around us may be said to be striving to the utmost to increase in numbers; that each lives by a struggle at some period of its life; that heavy destruction inevitably falls either on the young or old, during each generation or at recurrent intervals. Lighten any check, mitigate the destruction ever so little, and the number of the species will almost instantaneously increase to any amount. The face of Nature may be compared to a yielding surface with ten thousand sharp wedges packed close together and driven inwards by incessant blows, sometimes one wedge being struck, and then another with greater force.

This is quite contrary to the emotional and doctrinal dictates of Natural Theology; the destruction of individuals is a necessary part of the constructive change of species (natural selection operates on a population of organisms; individuals do not evolve); and the process is a "selfish" one, natural selection being unable to produce modification in any one species exclusively for the good of another. Nor are separate creative acts necessary for each species: given a species ranging from north to south, the populations closest to each other will also be those which vary most markedly, being adapted for different conditions; their hereditary characters nevertheless linked by an indefinite chain of intermediate variants more or less stably maintained by the conservative, normalizing effect of sexual reproduction, which produces progeny with characters, on average, midway between those of their parents. But come a breeding barrier of some kind (and on the necessity of this Howard is much more adamant than Darwin), a line of mountains puckering up from the earth's crust, an earthquake wrinkling it into valleys, an inlet inching it from the sea, a river tumbling into a new bed, or even a geographically localized disease (not even Darwin ever imagined that the continents themselves might put ponderously to sea away from each other), and the varieties will go their different ways towards becoming distinct species.

Howard's relaxed asides on modern Darwinian thinking are welcome — an insistence on the need for this isolation of breeding populations in the formation of new species, for example, would have solved one of Darwin's major difficulties. Variation, heredity and multiplication were obviously intrinsic to living things, but isolation was a messy, biological process, extrinsic. Yet without it even widely different, artificially selected domestic animals ("I do not believe that any ornithologist would place the English carrier, the short-faced tumbler, the runt, the barb, pouter, and fantail in the same genus") breed together freely (their offspring, like the feral pigeons in our cities, revert to rock doves). Darwin simply assumed that the

## Heron

First, I see him turning  
with the tide, coasting over  
marsh and alluvial meadows  
gresso with the under-water hopeful  
light of showers swathed across the falls;  
then settled, dark as sleet against  
the brighter sea, watch-keeper  
of his lean tower, hawk-like-eyed  
for slow fish, whatever unstable moves.  
Thin-shanked as reeds but firmly  
isolated, brooding over the sliding  
of water past him.

Quills pass in a storm of white  
and busy abouting, their bunter  
brusque and patent in the falling light.  
Feathering the currents, he lifts  
cattail twice, this time deceived.  
Watching him go and tuck  
his plumage into night, I think  
I aim myself for such  
considered, cunning flight.

Rodney Pybus

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Charles Darwin

process of artificial selection was somehow rapid and superficial, natural selection slow and deep. In fact infertility between emergent species will be selected, even if the geographical barrier between them is transient, for the two groups, having been freed from the averaging effect of sexual reproduction across their whole range, will have become better adapted to their new limited surroundings; and if contact is restored, the resultant mongrels, ill-adapted to either ecological niche, are likely to become protein for the crows.

This theoretical failure later left Darwin disastrously free to adopt an extreme concept of a species - that it was a "term... arbitrarily given for individuals closely resembling each other", a view which ignores the real reproductive discontinuity between species in the wild. But the rest of his own evidence supported him to the full: the geological record might well have stopped in 4004 at on October 23 at nine o'clock in the morning, the date of creation as calculated from Genesis, but actually it declined the opportunity. The newly discovered, inhuman time-scale of the rocks not only provided ample ages for the slow evolution of creatures as complex as the elephant, with its general span of thirty to sixty years, but it then continued downwards, layer upon geological layer, receding into ever-deepening antiquities which finally rolled out and away altogether beyond the reach of the imagination.

Even granted the great age of the world, it would have sufficed, to disprove Darwin's hypothesis, to have shown that the fossil record was composed of the remains of animals identical to the perfectly designed individuals alive today; but the skeletal (and exoskeletal) organisms, in their ancestral graveyard, "arranged themselves in otherwise inexplicably graded progressions, in slowly changing shapes, traced in stone."

And as in time, so in space - there is hardly a climate or environment in the Old World that is not paralleled in the New, yet their living productions are dramatically different. Darwin predicted that species belonging to a particular group should be more alike the closer they were, geographically, and so it has proved to be.

So much for the larger perspectives. For an exceptionally good explanation of the detailed structures of Darwin's work, and a real attempt to integrate the general thrust of his speculative intellect with his seemingly endless patience, his scholarly passion for minute calmly observed and lovingly assembled, one turns to Wilma George's book. She has written, among other things, the best short account I know of Darwin's

extraordinary eight years of work, begun four years after writing his private pencil sketch of "my species theory" and two years after completing his 1844 *Essay*, (which contained all the major ideas and was in some ways more cogently argued than *The Origin of Species*), when, already master of his revolutionary new science, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the classification of the biota.

He was initially fascinated. It is true, by an odd burrowing barnacle which he discovered during the voyage of the Beagle; but it is also true that barnacles make clear fossils that can be picked out through the rock strata with relative ease. Here was a large experiment to put his theory to the test.

Lyell believed that all basic types of animals had been present since the original creation (mammals and birds were not found in the earlier strata simply because they were not as tough as shells) and that species and varieties had appeared and disappeared as the environment changed. But Darwin's gradually changing barnacles provided him with ample evidence of their evolution. Yet it was strange that the sessile barnacles (like the common acorn barnacle clamped around our coasts) which were common in the rock formations of the last sixty-five million years, the Tertiary or Cenozoic era, seemed to disappear in Secondary or Mesozoic strata (on arbitrary mark on the geological clock sedimenting the minutes back to 245 million years). Such a gap did not fit Darwin's ideas, or Lyell's. Were the sessile barnacles created? Well, no. Darwin's perseverance was rewarded, and one day he received a drawing, amongst a mass of material from his barnacle-contributing correspondents, of a species from an old and rare rock stratum which proved to be on obvious ancestral link. He already knew more about gaps in the fossil record than his opponents ever would.

Aristotle's classification of living organisms was a ladder, the *scala naturae*, based on the differences between animals - whether or not they had red blood, for instance. Linnaeus decided upon an artificial classification in which convenience was the controlling principle. The characters, the guide, and the reproductive organs the identifying marks. Lamarck divided the animal kingdom into vertebrates and invertebrates, and many negative characters in his arrangements (worms, for example, metapneustic essences of animals and invertebrates). Into "four separate acts of creation. But it was Darwin who actually discovered the natural system of classification, the pursuit of which so many natural historians had spent their lives

Dissecting, classifying, sorting through unnamed, exotic, vast encrustations of barnacles gathered in his study (in September 1854, the investigation complete, he sent 10,000 barnacles back to their owners). Darwin bought a new microscope to add to his crude, simple lenses from the Beagle and set to work at his round table and on the window ledge, surrounded by other pieces of equipment necessary to the struggle: his wall of books, his reading chair, his couch, his snuff-box, an elaborate filing system of wooden drawers, a wash-basin and lavatory behind a screen to rescue him from possible distractions lurking in the family corridors outside, and an ingenious placement of mirrors to identify visitors crunched up the drive.

The tiny "parasites" that cling inside the shells of some barnacles, he discovered, complete with minute shells of their own, prehensile antennae and genitalia, but without mouth or gut, were the males of the species. And there were also tiny males in some hermaphrodite barnacles. In fact the sexual arrangements of barnacles were quite excessively *outré* unless one thought in terms of a progression of species: from hermaphrodites, to hermaphrodites with complementary males, to separately sexed barnacles. Sex itself had been naturally selected, or so it would seem. But why? To provide the variations, the raw materials of change, on which natural selection could act. And what patterns did this huge and careful classificatory survey reveal? Certainly there were no archetypes to be found - an organ serving one function in one group would simply be modified to perform a different task in another group; there was no evidence of separate creations; and, although an assessment of similarities between animals was the obvious key to success, serial homologies, indicating the essence of a group or an animal - such as Goethe's skull - leading to his triumphant declaration, "Der Mensch ist ein Wirbel", "man is a vertebra" - were not particularly helpful. The pattern was a tree, irregularly branched, a coral of life. The classification was by descent with modification.

Darwin, in his search for the laws of inheritance, the secrets of variation, discovered much the same evolutionary sexual progression in orchids, for instance. *The Varieties of Orchids* by J. E. Sowerby, published in 1862 - and the same insistence on cross-fertilization. *Orchids pyramidalis*, one of his favourite flowers, growing abundantly at Down, astonished him with the complexity of its adaptations

for sexual reproduction: its bright purple colour attracted moths by day, its faint smell brought moths at night, and an elaborate system of flowery trapdoors, petalled pathways and sticky discs assured that each visitor left with a cargo of pollen as well as a draught of nectar.

But despite his persistent experiments, his voracious reading, his far-flung network of learned men and wise breeders with whom he exchanged letters, Darwin failed to grasp the principles of heredity, or to get wind of the few essential facts that would have pointed him along the right path. He thought that the actual amount of the male contribution to fertilization was important ("We must not overlook the effects of the unequal combination of characters derived from both parents"). Yet as early as 1830 Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had watched down his microscope as one pollen grain put out a single pollen tube to grow down the style of an orchid and make contact with the egg cell; and in 1856 the fusion of a single pollen nucleus with a single egg nucleus had been observed; and in the same year Nathaniel Pritchard had seen one spermatozoon enter one egg cell of the freshwater alga *Oedogonium*.

Darwin, however, still believed in the age-old theory of blending inheritance, the mixing of blood, the mingling of small particles or fluids. So, even had he seen them, he would probably have dismissed Mendel's elegant 1866 results from his pea-breeding experiments in the monastery garden at Brünn, demonstrating the hard, particulate nature of the hereditary factors and the simple mathematical ratios governing their distribution down the generations, as aberrant. He proposed, instead, his "provisional hypothesis of pangenesis" whereby tiny gemmules gathered in the sex cells from every organ of the body and were passed on to the offspring.

Worried, later, by Kelvin's residual heat calculations of the age of the sun which gave the earth too short a life-span for evolution by natural selection the physicists must be wrong, and predicted the discovery of "a new source of energy now unknown to us" - radioactivity! Darwin retreated to his grandfather's and to Lamarck's theoretical position, to a belief in the inherited effect of use and disuse, of habit, and to a declaration that "variability of every kind is directly or indirectly caused by changed conditions of life"; which, as Howard remarks, is "one of the few major generalisations that Darwin ventured which is now known to be categorically false."

He should have stuck to his original

insight as tenaciously as one of his own barnacles to a rock: modern genetics would have vindicated him. As Howard tells us, evolution by natural selection is now thought to be

a necessary property of matter organised in a certain kind of way. The famous double helix of DNA, solved by Watson and Crick in 1953, is a structure that can both carry hereditary information and replicate itself and the information it carries with extraordinary but not complete accuracy. It thus embodies the three Darwinian conditions for evolution: heredity from the accuracy of self-replication, multiplication from the fact of self-replication, and variation from the rare inaccuracies of replication.

All organisms, moreover, from the primitive bacteria to man, use the same material to maintain the continuity of life, the same genetic code to translate hereditary information into an adaptive development process. Since the genetic code is arbitrary and, so far as is known, absolutely unconstrained by physical necessity to be precisely the way it is, the only reasonable explanation for this is that it has evolved only once. As Darwin himself remarked in 1871

If (and oh! what a big if!) we could conceive in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, light, heat, electricity, etc. present, that a protein compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes...

These are both excellent books, much more various than this exposition of their main theme has allowed me to indicate; they both deserve to become best sellers in their class. Jonathan Howard is to be formally congratulated; and Wilma George, when she returns from her latest intrusion into the domestic affairs of the night life of the Australian marsupial mouse, should be kudosed from her Land Rover by some villainous academic publishers, given pra-publication access to the new collection of Darwin letters, immersed with several tons of boxed Darwin manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library, and only released when she has completed the big biography it is plainly her duty to write.

It remains to salute the real undercover hero of these pages, the lampshades, *Lingula*, still safe and warm in the foul mud where it has lain, without competitors of any kind, untroubled by the indignities of natural selection and, it must be said, doing very little, for five hundred million years.

## Hunting the Highlands

Bruce Urquhart

ANTHONY ATTRA (Editor)

A Scottish Naturalist: The Sketches and Notes of Charles St John 1809-1856

192pp. Deutsch. £10.95.

0 233 97390 7

It is doubtful whether Charles St John can properly be called either Scottish or a naturalist: though having escaped, at the age of twenty-four, from his job as a clerk at the Treasury, to a house in Lord Bellinghame, he chose to live absorbed in shooting and fishing. Fortunately his "gifts" included the ability to write well, honestly and with such humour that it is possible to accept him as a naturalist, albeit an Morayshire where he spent his private income gave him the leisure to observe, ideologically and carefully record the game that he pursued as well as his environment. Born like Darwin in 1809, so seeing the dawn of modern physical science, St John was on the whole more susceptible to Isaac Newton and Gilbert White than to so many birds; his identification of a library as well as his gunroom. In 1884 he formed a friendship with Compton Mackenzie, Sheriff of Moray, who

became, his Macconas.

The friendship began one windy day when James was "making out a bag of partridges" on the banks of the river Findhorn; he was searching in vain for two wounded birds when St John appeared out of the bushes with a large black poodle which promptly retrieved them. After this encounter they became frequent companions. St John's anecdotes so impressed James that he persuaded him to note them down and about a year later, over a shooting lunch, announced that John Murray had accepted St John's first collection, to be published as *Wild Sports and Natural History of the Highlands*. In 1849 followed *A Tour of the Suirford Incorporating Field Notes of a Naturalist* in two volumes, and in 1863, seven years after St John's early death, *Natural History of Moray*, edited by James. In 1878 John Murray published the first illustrated edition of *Wild Sports* and the preface refers to no less than seven previous editions.

Anthony Attra has drawn from these books the text of a *Scottish Naturalist*. All the head of each chapter appear in the second edition of the *Natural History of Moray* which establish perfectly the appropriate than the romantic *Wild Sports* illustrations, they also make clear his choice of a house in little Moray. St John's own spontaneous pen-and-ink drawings enliven the text on almost every page; his watercolours, some of which are reproduced

here, are charming though a little naive.

St John never attempted to disguise his sportsman's love-hate relationship with nature; to watch a hawk tear its live prey apart or an adder slowly engulf a struggling frog can make a gunshot seem benign. Though he relished shooting he was not a trophy hunter nor did he approve of the huge bags of organized shoots and their attendant publicity. His main pleasures were derived from working his dog along the banks of the Findhorn, over rough ground about the woods of Darnaway or from observing the waterfowl of Loch Spynie; pheasants came little into his journals though he lived in what Trevelyan called "the den of the kept preyman".

Understandably, Attra has chosen to omit gory accounts of deer stalking as well as one of the wanton killing of woodcock out of season. It is hard to see how anyone who has been close to that beautiful bird and watched it pick up and tuck its young between its thighs to carry it to safety could shoot at any time, but St John also shot the rare spotted woodpecker and the rose-coloured starling which may have been destined for the "bird stuffer" and subsequently the glass case. Few Scottish Victorian country houses were without a case or two as they were considered instructive for the children and less upsetting than keeping birds in cages, which, St John characteristically called "prisons" though he used them.

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### BRIEF LIVES



# Manoeuvres on the margins

Laurence Whitehead

R. A. HUMPHREYS

Latin America and the Second World War: Volume One 1939-1942  
232pp. Athlone Press. £16.  
0485 177102

We call it a World War and certainly our world was engulfed. But not all nations were equally involved, and not all perspectives on the conflict are readily congruent with our own. In the Americas there was no land war, practically no air war, and even the naval conflicts were relatively limited. In some republics the war might be seen as a struggle between remote empires that were almost equally indifferent to Latin American interests. It was a conflict they had not initiated and could not shape. Whatever great principles the belligerents might espouse, non-belligerents would have at best a secondary claim on the fruits of victory. Until the victors had reorganized the world according to their convenience, the national interests and preoccupations of marginal states would have to be postponed. Of course these were minor complaints compared to the nemesis that war visited on other continents, but they were real enough to those charged with steering Latin America through the war.

To reconstruct this strange and formative period of the continent's history therefore requires an analysis at two very different levels. Against the stark drama of the global conflict must somehow be balanced the more parochial perspectives that largely determined regional affairs. R. A. Humphreys has recognized this problem, and his manner of resolving it deserves respect, although for some tastes he has offered too British-centred a view.

This is a plausible vantage-point, considering the strength of Latin America's economic ties with Britain, and the importance of her naval presence in the region. The naval aspect is of current interest. Within a month of Hitler's invasion of Poland the American republics united in a declaration to proclaim a three-hundred-mile security zone around their coastlines. With Roosevelt's support they agreed that the republics might individually or collectively patrol their waters to keep them free from the commission of any belligerent act by any non-American nation. But Britain, France and Holland all possessed colonies in the Americas, and no declaration of neutrality could be imposed upon those colonies without their agreement. Accordingly they were exempted, as were the shorelines of Canada. Still a problem remained. London claimed British Honduras and the Falkland Islands for its empire, but Guatemala and Argentina respectively had never accepted what they regarded as British claims to their national territories. Neither republic was therefore willing to exempt those British-occupied coastlines from their neutrality proclamations.

In any case, it was one thing to proclaim the neutrality of territorial waters, but another to enforce it. Only the US Navy had the resources to establish anything like an adequate patrol, and until 1942 most US ships were posted to the Pacific. In the absence of an effective military presence from the American republics the European belligerents were unlikely to respect neutral waters, as was soon demonstrated by a conflict over the pocket battleship Graf Spee which was engaging in military operations near the River Plate. As Churchill told Roosevelt in October 1939, the British would "have great difficulty in accepting a zone which was only patrolled by a weak neutral. But of course if the American navy takes care of it, that is all right." In practice this meant that the zone would be relatively effective in the Caribbean but would not carry much conviction in the South Atlantic or the South Pacific. By the end of 1939, Churchill answered protests about British naval actions around Latin America's "Southern Cone" by arguing that the British navy was benefiting the American republics by clearing German raiders from their

coasts. British conditions for observing the neutrality declaration were that no more German warships enter the South Atlantic, and that German ships which had taken refuge in South American ports must be laid up under the control of a Pan-American organization for the duration of the war.

It was in this context that in early 1940 the Argentine government set out to strengthen its already significant air and naval forces for the effective surveillance of its 3,000-mile coastline. An overstretched US Navy and Air Force were hastening to establish bases in the Caribbean and perhaps Brazil, but could not plausibly undertake responsibility for the defence of Argentina even if invited. Soon afterwards the Argentines decided to create their own armaments industry under the control of the military. (Fabricaciones Militares subsequently became a major industrial conglomerate, through which many officers gained experience of organizing production and managing a sophisticated labour force.) The Germans naturally sought to minimize the potential for Anglo-Argentine friction inherent in this situation, and to divert criticism from themselves. Berlin launched a propaganda counter-offensive. Hitler's representative in Buenos Aires denounced as "infamous calumny" all reports of Nazi designs on the Western Hemisphere, and in May 1940 the Berlin government issued a prohibition on acts of sabotage on the Southern American mainland, and on belligerent naval activity within the three-hundred-mile security zone. For the time being German forces were fully occupied elsewhere, and Berlin's main objectives in the region were to keep the Americas non-belligerent. The prestige gained by Germany's European conquests could be used to sway some Latin American opinion (particularly opinion in southern South America) in a pro-Axis direction, always provided excesses of arrogance were avoided.

Nevertheless, by the time of Pearl Harbor the great majority of the Latin American republics had shifted from a posture of neutrality to an anti-Axis alignment under the leadership of the US. Their economic and communication links with Europe had withered; whereas trade, credits and military transactions with North America had blossomed. Within a month of the Japanese attack all but two Latin American nations (Argentina and Chile) were ready to break diplomatic relations with Germany, Italy and Japan. Two major regional powers subsequently sent troops to fight in the Allied cause (Mexico to the Philippines and Brazil to Italy). By March 1945, only Argentina still stayed aloof, claiming a neutrality which only inclinations of those in command in Buenos Aires.

This contrast between Argentina and its neighbours provides a major theme of Professor Humphreys's new volume, the first of an intended two (to 1945). Yet initially, President Vargas of Brazil appeared more pro-Axis than President Ortiz of Argentina. Indeed, when the Nazis stormed through Holland in the summer of 1940, the Argentine government took a little-noticed initiative intended to shift the American republics away from strict neutrality and towards the European camp. At that time the US was not ready for such a move (leaving it all the more opportunity was lost). A month later, after the fall of France, the President of Brazil hastened to assure the German ambassador in Rio of his personal sympathy for the authoritarian states, and his aversion to England and the democratic system. During the Battle of Britain and the conclusive German victory, whereas the Radicals of Argentina grew increasingly apprehensive at the prospect of a Europe unified under Hitler, the temptation to court the apparent victor was at least as strong in Argentina as in Brazil, and yet it was

resisted for longer. Why then did Brazil finally opt for the Allies, whilst Argentina did not? Humphreys relies heavily on the narrative to tell its own story, and his book serves to recall the importance of such questions rather than to provide direct answers to them. The narrative he provides is a clear and informative overview, mostly written in a judicious and dispassionate style (although there are occasional lapses, as when he vents his displeasure against Laureano Gómez of Colombia or describes the ethnic composition of Brazil and Mexico in very crude terms). He points out how near Argentina came to blocking Brazil's break with the Axis in January 1942, and his account suggests four headings under which one might examine the eventual divergence of Argentina and Brazil, but he offers no final assessment.

First, commercial considerations would imply that Brazil might remain neutral while Argentina backed the Allies. For with regard to trading relations Brazil was more dependent than Argentina on Axis-controlled markets, and therefore under more economic pressure to stay neutral. This Vargas explains why President Getulio of Brazil tried for so long to placate both sides, but it was not decisive when the moment of choice finally arrived.

Second, internal politics seemed at first sight to work in the same sense. But in the event the anti-democratic sentiments of one president and the other proved less decisive than the terms on which they held office. Thus, the Vargas dictatorship was at its height, and the Brazilian president had sufficient ascendancy to take his time in exploring alternatives, and then to base his choice on long-term considerations of national interest. Argentine politics were more turbulent, with an ailing president whose *de facto* power gradually passed into the hands of his vice-president, a man of very different persuasions whose decisions were necessarily shaped by the need to consolidate a precarious hold on office. Argentine policies therefore turned unpredictably, reacting to external shocks and internal shifts with little appearance of overall strategy. Buenos Aires soon found itself unexpectedly isolated, and reacted not by accommodation but by bluster.

A third type of explanation, and the one which attracted much international press attention before Pearl Harbor, concerned the conspiratorial activities of "Fifth Columnists" in the pay of German embassies. Humphreys

devotes quite a few pages to some of the more spectacular episodes of this kind, and the broad impression emerges that anti-Nazi forgeries and provocations were perhaps as frequent as real German conspiracies. (Friedrich Katz, using Berlin archives before he left East Germany, gave a different emphasis, but his work does not appear in the bibliography.) Both in southern Brazil and in Argentina there were large settlements of German nationals that could be organized under Nazi leadership. From the outset Vargas was the more resolute in controlling this danger, in part because it conflicted with his own personal authoritarianism (Argentina being superficially democratic at this time), and perhaps also because Brazil's Germans were concentrated in the south where national security was supposedly at risk from Argentine expansionism. It would however be a mistake to overstate the role of the German colonies of South America, and to underestimate that of the Italian, Spanish and Japanese communities, all of which were also subject to Axis influence. In Argentina the Italian influence was far greater than that of Germany, and it is a significant omission that Humphreys overlooks Italian diplomatic records for the period.

All these points are significant, but it is the fourth heading that may provide the crucial explanation. Local geopolitics receive some discussion in this volume, but the underlying logic is not very fully worked out. It was surely Brazil's fear of Argentina that inevitably drew her towards alliance with the strongest outside power (Germany in 1940 or the US in 1942). What probably clinched the matter for Vargas was Roosevelt's offer of US military supplies to replace cancelled German shipments. By contrast Argentina was drawn to a neutrality that implied sympathy for the Axis powers because only a strong Europe might help her counterbalance the threat of a Latin America dominated economically, militarily and politically by the United States. The supposedly pro-Allied foreign minister of Argentina, José María Cantilo, said as much to the Italian ambassador as soon as the European war broke out. What Cantilo feared (with reason) was that the US would displace Britain, Germany and Italy, as the main industrial force in the hemisphere, and that this shift would undermine Argentina's regional pre-eminence. What Buenos Aires most wanted was a neutrality agreement which included the right to supply foodstuffs to the civilian populations of all the belligerent powers, so that in effect

Argentine exports would be exempted from blockade. The US and Argentina were in competition for the export of temperate foodstuffs. American security guarantees were of little practical value to those located in the southern part of South America, and in political terms US hegemony could only be at the expense of Argentine regional influence and perhaps even of Argentine sovereignty. Alone of the Latin American republics Argentina did not receive US military equipment under the Lend-Lease programme. Only Argentina had the foreign exchange reserve and the industrial and military resources to attempt an independent line, although it is significant that Chile, with quite different trading interests and different political inclinations, also responded to the war in a somewhat similar manner. In short, Argentine leaders of various ideological persuasions had good reason to resist an alliance dominated by the US. A total victory by the Allies would be a major setback to Argentina's national interests, however appealing it might be to democratic sentiments. Precisely the same reasoning dictated that Brazil would draw closer to the US and seek to benefit from the resulting shift in the regional power balance, notwithstanding President Vargas's personal distaste for democratic politics.

This history also illuminates a number of related themes, such as the eclipse of Britain in the region, the origins of US military influence over the armed forces of Latin America (traced to the famous Lend-Lease Act of 1941), and the terms on which Mexico achieved its reconciliation with Washington after the radicalism of the 1930s. Indeed the author provides something resembling a Baedeker's guide to Latin American politics of the early 1940s, always reviewing local realities from an essentially Foreign Office perspective, but with many insights for all that. Consider, for example, this observation provided by a certain Mr Ogilvie Forbes, our man in Havana in January 1942: "The present Cuban government has been bought by the US government who in the form of eventual intervention may have to pay a high price, but morally... and materially... Batista was then at the height of his career, and Fidel Castro was not yet sixteen."

Overall this narrative provides another reminder that the contemporary pattern of world politics was far from inevitable, and underlines how many of its most familiar features were in fact created by the necessities, and by the accidents, of the Second World War.

## Days of mésintelligence

François Kersaudy

REANOR M. GATES

End of the Affair: The Collapse of the Anglo-French Alliance, 1939-40  
630pp. Allen and Unwin. £15.  
004 940063 0

The title *End of the Affair* must not be taken to mean that we have seen the end of a long line of books on the collapse of the Anglo-French alliance in 1940. R. M. Gates has undertaken to lead the reader down the melancholy and much-travelled corridor which begins with a half-war on Hitler, and ends in defeat, recriminations and even outright hostility between the two allies in July 1940.

The book contains no extraordinary revelations, perhaps because it is mostly based on sources that have been extensively used in the past. Though subject, it quotes a truly impressive number of French memoirs, studies and contemporary accounts. What Mrs. Gates really succeeds in doing is to advance through the maze of half-truths, fiery rhetoric, specious interpretations and apologetic memoirs that have baffled

historians for the better part of forty years. With seemingly inexhaustible proceeds to give us a highly business-like, scrupulously documented, non-sensational account of events as they unfolded at the time. The lack of enthusiasm for war on both sides of the Channel in September, 1939, is abundantly documented, as is the appalling lack of coordination between the two allies all through the campaign and the obvious scepticism as to the other's ability or will to fight.

Although the reader is unlikely to learn anything new about Churchill, and the main actors on the British side, he will catch a few very sharp glimpses of some key personalities: on the French side, Paul Reynaud; clever, witty, like Churchill; brilliant speaker. However, neither prudences nor profundities were among stress often appeared at odds with his circumstances. Under the circumstances, his consistency, Admiral Darlan; ambitious, impulsive and anglophobic; General Weingand, with his "interference and sympathy"; Camille Chautemps, subtle, pacifist, confusion at Bordeaux where the French government withdrew after the German invasion; and likewise described in striking terms.

The city of Bordeaux, as it turned out, was by mid-June probably the worst place in France for a government wanting to continue the struggle to have come. What might yet have been possible in the isolated surroundings of Calcutta became that much more remote once the atmosphere of rout, panic and moral decomposition that prevailed in the capital of the Gironde began to spread its virulent, paralytic, cabinet and parliamentary circles, an infection obviously less conducive than ever to firmness, rational thought, or difficult decisions of any kind.

The bombastic statement on the dust-jacket that this is a "definitive work" is in stark contrast to the modesty and caution displayed by the author throughout her narrative, and can probably be ascribed to an over-eager publisher. Indeed, even a casual look at the Daladier archives, the Reynaud archives, the Quai d'Orsay archives and the archives of the French army's historical service - to name but the most obvious - would have yielded a large amount of additional information. In a matter as delicate as the collapse of the Anglo-French alliance, where historians have been known to quarrel over a sentence or even half a word - in a single document, the omission of all reference to the French archives is a bold stroke; but also mildly unsettling.

## On progressive lines

Alan Ryan

MICHAEL YOUNG

The Emigrants of Dartington: The Creation of a Utopian Community  
381pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£15.  
07100 9051 X

In one of the best-known passages of *The Road to Wigan Pier* George Orwell pronounced a comprehensive anathema against middle-class progressivism - "that dreary tribe of high-minded women and sandal wearers and bearded fruit-juice drinkers who come flocking towards the smell of 'progress' like bluebottles to a dead cat... If only the sandals and the pistachio coloured shirts could be put in a pile and burnt, and every vegetarian, teetotaler and creeping Jesus sent home to Weylyn Garden City to do his yoga exercises quietly." It is all too easy to imagine what Orwell would have made of Dartington in the mid-1930s, financed as it was by William Whitney's ill-gotten millions, and sheltering as it did a progressive school, experimental farms, modern dance, modern theatre, differential farm workers, sexually liberated adolescents and a sprinkling of adult homosexuals. It is rather less easy to work out quite what Michael Young wants to say in defence of the Dartington experiment; it is quite clear that he feels enormous affection for almost everyone and everything about it, but it is clear, too, that his sociologist's head is at least partly at odds with his heart - that when he asks the fatal question, "how much effect on the rest of the world has Dartington had, and has it been worth the time, money and energy lavished on it?" he has to reply that he doesn't know. That he himself has had a richly and vividly good time as a pupil of the school, a friend of the family, and a Trustee of the Dartington Trust does, however, give the book a warmth and a readability perhaps out of proportion to its importance as either biography or social record.

Dartington - the school, farms, sawmill, construction company, arts centre, and all the rest - was invented, or discovered, in the spring of 1925. Its joint inventors were Leonard Elmhirst and Dorothy Straight, the son of a Yorkshire "squire", she the heiress of William Whitney; his spiritual father was Tagore, poet, sage, farmer, and teacher, with whom Leonard had worked in India, and whose settlement at Sri Lanka and Dorset had been for many years the cooperation between Leonard Elmhirst and Dorothy Straight was not in itself all that surprising; that they married, lived in England, and devoted themselves to Dartington for the best part of half a century is much more so. Up until 1925, at which point he was thirty-two years old and she thirty-eight, he had been something of a "drifter" - though an onomastically energetic and conscientious one, who was drifting in search of a vocation; she was a widow, whose energies were bent towards good, radical causes, such as

the *New Republic*, which she owned and which she had to all intents started. His family was no doubt old, but it was not wealthy - indeed, it belonged to the kind of bloody-minded, hard-up landowning gentry who made up in pride for what they lacked in cash. His father was a hard man and a devoted sportsman, who abandoned the pulpit as soon as he inherited the family estate near Barnsley; his sons were sent to the usual brutal prep schools and the usual anti-intellectual public schools. The horrors of these usually served one useful purpose. Lonely outposts of Empire, prisoner-of-war camps, even the average English jail, were readily endurable thereafter. In Leonard Elmhirst's case, St Aselm's and Repton served another useful purpose; he so hated his time there that he knew what schools must at all costs avoid being. But before 1925 his life had taken on no set shape; he had been meant for the church, but his faith petered out; he went to India for the YMCA, but his common sense was insufficiently Christian for the Association; he decided that he ought to learn modern agriculture, so went to Cornell - and got what Michael Young records as "gentleman's grades" (aside from an A in chickens).

Still, the ingredients weren't as unpromising as this suggests. He had a confidence which doubtless owed something to his social class, but perhaps as much to his unwieldiness - there were tasks to be fulfilled, and plainly people ought to get on and do them, either in person, or by financing them. Obviously one factor that allowed Dorothy to fall in love with him was his unflinching attitude to her money; he did not love her for it, but he was perfectly happy to spend it on good causes and it was this that had brought them together in the first place. All the same, it was a protracted courtship; Dorothy had given Willard Straight a very hard time before she accepted him, making him wait, blowing hot and cold, setting him tests of character; and she would have treated Leonard worse, except that he was, oddly, both tough and tender, refused to be too much messed about, refused to vanish, refused to be nothing more than a good friend, and to her great relief he put his own way. Her friends were agitated, complaining that she was going to exile herself in England; she was apprehensive, but knowing that Leonard's heart was set on his "English experiment", she sent him ahead to purchase an appropriate estate, and then devoted herself to it. When he saw the Dartington estate for the first time, in March 1925, he stopped looking; the picturesque ruins and run-down farm buildings seem to have turned before his eyes into opportunities for rural craftsman, architects, Cornell experts and progressive educators.

Making it work turned out to be another kettle of fish. Most of Young's book is a record of the perils of amateur management; more than once, he remarks drily that neither the principles of authority nor the techniques of good management seem

to have occupied the Elmhirsts' attention. In a way, it could hardly have been otherwise. They were building a community which would liberate creative energy, whether it was the creative energy of the farmers Crook and Nielsen or the creative energy of Jooss's dance company or Chekhov's actors, and that demanded that they should leave a great deal of room for initiative; on the other hand, it was the Elmhirsts' money that provided the opportunity; if they

Since they were never meant to fulfil straightforward commercial criteria, the fact that such enterprises did not do so was hardly a failure. What is more deplorable, though, is the failure to see that novelty rather than revival had to be the order of the day. "High tech" rather than arts and crafts might have provided a prosperous industrial pocket in the Devon countryside - but the assistant of Turgenev would probably have flinched at the thought if it had



An improvisation class in the old yard at Dartington Hall during a dance and drama course.

refused to go on funding experiments the experiments would have to stop, so there was no escaping the fact that they were ultimately in charge. This is, of course, a recipe not so much for immediate disaster as for constant back-biting, tale-telling and confusion, and even in Young's rather restrained account of it, there are an awful lot of sudden sackings, hurt feelings and bruised pride. The remedy would, no doubt, have been to set clear and simple targets for the various departments to meet, and then for the Elmhirsts to sit on their hands. But, the sort of "experiment" which Leonard Elmhirst wanted was not an experiment in humane but scientific management; for all his enthusiasm - gullibility almost - for agricultural expertise, he had no conception of what expert management might involve.

Seeing that the "experiment" did embrace so many aspects of life, however, it is the successes rather than the failures which are impressive - and even the failures were strictly relative, since, as all good experimenters insist, negative results are essential to progress too, and to find out what you can't do is often a useful step towards finding out what you can. The building firm which was set up to build the new buildings for the school, theatre, farms and their employees turned into a prosperous construction company; the farms did sometimes better, sometimes worse, but certainly provided some information about the uses of the land. The textile factory, eventually began to prosper; and for a while at least so did timber production.

come to him, and the Yorkshireman from Barnsley would, after all, have associated industry with something that devastated the countryside. To most of the outside world, Dartington means the school, and the history of the school occupies a central place in Young's narrative, too. Here, the record is somewhat confused - though, so far as being utterly unlike anything resembling an orthodox English boarding-school is concerned, Dartington has always been a triumphant success. The confusion is endemic to progressive education: is child-centred education a matter of treating the happiness of the child at school as the most important issue, or is it a matter of trying to secure that he or she has the best possible chance of individual happiness after school? Progressive educationists tend to fudge the issue by grepping at the comforting belief that there is no conflict between a happy childhood and a happy adult life, as in general terms there obviously is not. But, when it comes to organizing a curriculum, appointing teachers, deciding whether or not to enter children for outside examinations and all the rest of it, things come to look very different.

In a manner of speaking, the school's history was a progression - or retrogression - from Tagore to Bertrand Russell and thence to post-1945 liberalism. Leonard Elmhirst's ideal was that children would become educated by joining in the life of the estate, and that common and foresters and carpenters would be teachers, alongside a few teachers of the more

usual sort. This didn't work, and neither did the attempt to dispense with a head for the school. In 1931, the Elmhirsts required a head who had a number of clear ideas, one of which was that he, not they, ran the school, and on his - or Bertrand Russell's - lines. A. S. Neill envied him the unlimited Whitney cash; Russell's two oldest children enjoyed the place vastly better than they had liked their parents' Beacon Hill - no doubt, they benefited from the fact that Dartington was not run by their parents, but only by someone who thought their father the moral equal of Socrates and Christ; Conrad Russell came some years later but did not stay. The quality of some of the 1930s' teaching staff was astonishing - to have been taught English by Raymond O'Malley and biology by David Laek must rank with the greatest of educational privileges. To the outside world other things were more astonishing, such as unsegregated showers, and naked adolescents leaping in and out of the Dart in full view of the railway - as Young observes with some pleasure, it was an ideal chance for the pupils to provide their elders with just the shock they were anxiously watching for, not of their compartment windows. The view of some advocates of co-education, to the effect that familiarity with the naked bodies of the other sex has an anaphrodisiac effect, was conclusively disproved; given how hard they tried, however, the school's pupils produced astonishingly few teenage pregnancies or other disasters.

After the war, the school ran down; Curry was stuck in the 1930s, and could not face change, could not bear to surrender any independence. His successors first made the school more academically orthodox, then in the late 1960s, under Royston Lambert, branched out into cooperation with the state system, and into exchanges with pupils from the West Riding - this latter being yet another casualty of the disastrous reorganization of local government a few years later. What we don't get from Young's account of all this is much of a picture of what happened in later life (to the Dartington pupils) - his only contribution to this topic is to complain in a footnote of the inaccuracies in Maurice Pugh's *Progressive Retreat*. But there is a hint throughout that in any case Young's sympathy lies with the view that childhood and adolescence aren't times of preparation for later life, but a large slice of life itself; and that judged in a humane light Dartington was a triumph for the pleasure principle - its students may have done better, worse, or much the same in later life as a result of going there, but while they were there they had a uniquely enjoyable and life-enhancing time. It is a King's College rather than a Trinity College view of the world, perhaps - but then, although Leonard Elmhirst passed his education by joining in the life of the estate, and that common and foresters and carpenters would be teachers, alongside a few teachers of the more

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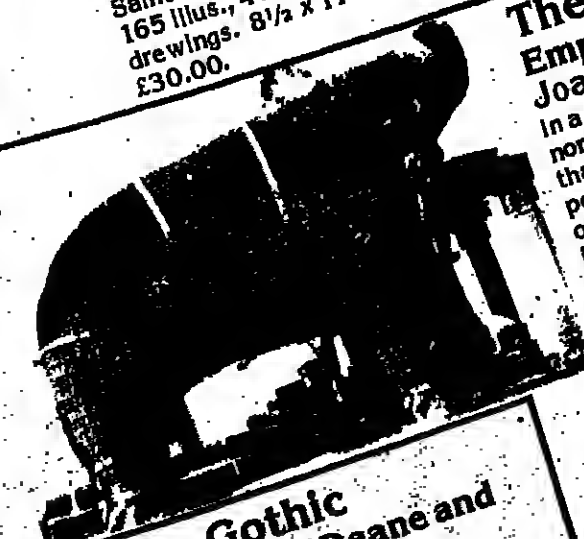
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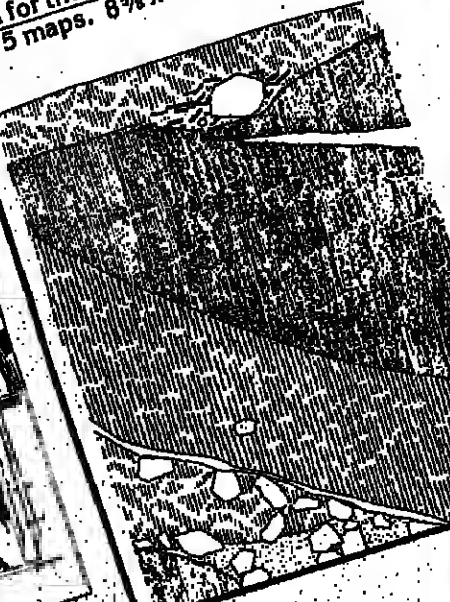
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# Scenes from Great Stanhope Street

Pat Rogers

WARREN DERRY (Editor)

The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney  
Volume 9: Bath 1815-1817 - Letters 935-1085A  
Volume 10: Bath 1817-1818 - Letters 1086-1179

1062pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press. £80 the set.  
0 19 812508 9

In November 1815 General Alexandre D'Arbly and his wife Fanny took lodgings in Great Stanhope Street, Bath. It was the last marital home they were to share. They had returned from the Continent after Waterloo: Fanny had observed the battle from Brussels, while her husband stayed at his post at Trèves, unaware of the great events. The general had now been put on the *émigré* list: he had been kicked on the leg by a horse while at Trèves, and the wound was slow to heal. Fanny herself had a breast removed a few years earlier; both were now in their sixties, and with the general's half-pay long in arrears they were by no means comfortably off. A brief stay in solid Rivers Street, up above the Circus, was enough to show them how expensive life in Bath could be. Without enthusiasm, Fanny sought out "comfortable & pleasant lodgings at a reduced price". It was thus they found themselves in Great Stanhope Street, "as it is called, not by any means, from being of a magnitude or magnificence to merit the epithet".

The house survives, three-storeyed, single-fronted, never quite a fashionable address. Even imposing Norfolk Crescent, round the corner, dwindled to a hilly back of the wartime slum in building. The D'Arblys occupied the first and second floors, living so far as possible out of the back, where a fine view stretched out towards Somerset. Down the road lay New King Street, whose residents

laid included Herschel as well as Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his father ("uchor and orthogonist" as the discreet phlegm has it). Living at 17 now, although Fanny did not know it when she arrived, was none other than Mrs Piozzi, widowed a second time and burdened with her own troubles. It was some time before the two women exchanged calls. Fanny went to a dingy pair of rooms where she found Mrs Piozzi "in mourning . . . stiff, silent, & with an air of petrifying coldness". The former sprightliness had gone, and her visitor even detected in her the attitudes of a "rank methodist". Later contacts produced more "animated chatter", but never any full restoration of the friendship destroyed (like so many others) in the aftermath of Mrs Thrale's marriage to Piozzi. Fanny's good relations with Queneau Thrale, now Lady Keith, were enough to confirm the breach. There are few hints of awareness in Fanny that the world had behaved cruelly towards Mrs Piozzi.

But her obsessions lay elsewhere, in her immediate family: above all, in the fortunes of her husband and son. Her first years in Bath embrace a long running comedy, with her son envying tragic episode which centred on the general. Alex, a rather young twenty at the outset, held a studentship at Cambridge which was designed for those proceeding to a medical degree. But he was preoccupied. In a delicate way, with the mathematical tripos, and in the end (after a deeply tedious passage of academic legation, which Fanny didn't grasp at all) he was obliged to forfeit the award. This put further strain on his parents' slender means. He had also had to migrate from Caius to Christ's - "Christ Church", his mother obstinately called it. For the next two years, until his graduation as tenth Wrangler, his ordination and fellowship, Alex arrogated most of Fanny's time and nervous energy. Meanwhile, unknown to her, the general was dying.

Alex figures in her mind as a "giddy

pate". "You excentric [sic] Alex", one who must overcome "his terrible & gauche sauterelle". In her letters she cries out, "If ever there was a Tom Jones [sic] in the world, surely it is my lot to be his master." The young man is discovered lounging upon the floor; he works hard in haste, and then stops: "he is so sick when urged to study that he disposes of his time in a happy application to what he likes." In other words, he is like all students who ever existed, but fiercely possessive and protective (and fiercely) parents can be forgiven for misreading the situation. Fanny constitutes herself his "flapper", and badgers him continually to abjure the new-fangled French mathematics not yet accepted at Cambridge. She writes hortatory verses: "If you work well a Wrangler you must be; And if you Divurge, or Choice - An Optimist. So take your general is almost equally severe, though advising his son once to let up a little: it is important "que tu ne continues point à tenir dans une trop grande tension les fibres de ton cerveau". In France he finds a prospective wife for the boy, but Fanny predictably replies that "our Alex is too unformed, too inexperienced, & too helpless to draw his Ticket in the great & eventful Lottery of Marriage, till his Character unfolds". Huffed that her husband should thus "enter into a negotiation for the marriage of our child à mon insu", she firmly resists the plan. Alex is not consulted. The general contents himself with the thought that the trend towards later marriages "remonte à une époque, qu'il serait facile de démontrer avoir été celle du relâchement des mœurs pures et domestiques de nos bons ayeux".

Poor Alex is obviously being set up for the role of Henry Crawford: "His mind, his principles, his Character all want forming & steady; for though he is a stranger to Vice, he has too energy or exertion for active virtue. And he has a terrible secret, which I will bleep out initially: "He owned that

..... had so imperious a power over his whole faculties & Being, that nothing weighed in his scale when once he was engaged. . . . This disturbing vice, which occupies Fanny for several pages, is an addiction to chess: finally Alex writes to his father, "Je renonce formellement et absolument aux échecs, je renonce à ce frivole amusement . . . qui m'a fait négliger si longtemps mes intérêts et mes devoirs." But he relapses: sent away from Cambridge acquaintances, such as the computer pioneer Charles Babbage, to a reading party in Ilfracombe, he is forbidden to attend a cricket match in order to work. Who should then arrive but Dr Thomas Bowdler, just about to bestow on a grateful world *The Family Shakespeare* and soon to start cleaning up Gibbon? Bowdler had been a chess freak and had achieved a draw against Blücher in a simultaneous exhibition. Naturally Alex persuades Bowdler (who has given up the game) to discuss knotty points of tactics. Fanny, who had not seen Bowdler for thirty years, was not amused.

Ilfracombe marks a turning-point in this story. It rains for fourteen weeks; the place is no more than an incipient resort, Sanditon with a north wind and no amenities. Fanny has her famous adventure when stranded in a cove, with a dog, by the incoming tide. Having lost a favourite nephew earlier in the year, she now hears of the death of Madame de Staël, and so begins *la série noire*. After her return to Bath, Christmas Day 1817, and died three days later. Apoplectic and gouty, Charles had continued to live too well, pursuing his moderate career as a classicist, collecting old newspapers, about their father's memorial in Westminster Abbey. All this time the general was in France, vainly pursuing his back-pay and his health. He returned a broken man, and now the tragic dénouement would unfold. On the day that Fanny learnt of Alex's success at Cambridge, which disproved all her malign forecasts, her husband made a note in his private diary, "ce jour vient de me dévoiler une terrible vérité".

Ever since the kick on his leg, he had been a semi-invalid, with an attack of hepatitis compounding his problems. He had been prescribed some exotic remedies, including opodeldoe and syrup of sassa. Now a long-standing bowel disorder became acute; at first it was treated as a stricture, but it was evidently cancer of the rectum. Fanny called in the leading Bath physician William Tudor, later to treat Wordsworth; the apothecary "lost his air of satisfaction & complacency". There follows a tender and moving record of the general's last days; Fanny nurses him devotedly, writes down his

So, for the present, we leave Fanny, bereaved and uncertain as she returns to London. It is an extraordinary thought that she still had over twenty years to go: a son, two sisters and another brother to outlive, as well as a nephew and niece. It was not till 1840 that her remains would be laid next to her son's, and near those of her husband: above them all, the still-new steeple on Wolcot church proclaimed a classical heyday of Bath which Fanny, beset by family problems, had not been able to recapture.

every word, and sets out a narrative of holy dying. Previously we had this account as abridged and edited by Charlotte Barrett, Fanny's niece. Now one of the most detailed and honest descriptions of a terminal illness which exists in the language. The basic model particularities restored (grasping Joycean fullness of presentation. After a much heart-searching, Fanny at last permits a priest to give her husband the last sacrament, though satisfied in her mind that there was "reason to believe my beloved Partner was Protestant, also, in his heart". She forbids any more visits from the priest, and after D'Arbly's death makes it clear to the persistent Father that she "was a hopeless subject as a Convert".

The wealth of materials now made available increases the sense of admiration felt towards Fanny Hemlow, who covered this ground in a single long chapter of her notable biography, *The History of Fanny Burney* (1958). Again the editing of these two volumes in one is masterly comprehensive, over a whole range of British and French documents: there is a very good appendix on the D'Arbly finances. If anything, the notes are perhaps excessive in their provision - the mere mention of a clergyman inspires a full listing of his numerous progeny (none of whom appears in this segment of the journal), ending up with the information, "A direct descendant of Jane Ann by her first marriage, Captain Mark Phillips (b. 1948), would in 1973 marry H. R. H. Princess Anne (b. 1950). Two bare words "the Rectors" (of Bath and Wolcot) provoke a history of the advowsons from Elizabethan times. It ought to have been explained that *Tales of my Landlord*, which Fanny reads and appraises in vague terms, must refer to *Old Mortality*. But there are virtually no errors. If I point out that Peterloo did not take place in August 1829 (p. 304) and that Chatelet was not minister from 1710 to 1714 (p. 605), these are the desperate responses which pedantry makes after witnessing the elegant ordering of thousands of facts hitherto unknown to it. The index is a thing of beauty and a miniature history of society in itself.

## Subtly social

Richard Brown

IGOR WEBB

From Custom to Capital: The English Novel and the Industrial Revolution  
219pp. Cornell University Press.  
\$17.50  
0 8014 1392 3

You don't have to be a Marxist to discuss the relationship between literature and society, but it certainly helps. Marxists have a stable idea of what exactly a society is, and that idea can be used as a fixed point of reference to which literature may be related. This, as Igor Webb seems to argue, is the advantage that Georg Lukács has over Leslie Stephen. But Marxism traditionally gives rather a dangerously stable definition of itself with Raymond Williams's well-known critique of the traditional between art and economics in favour of autonomous role.

From these beginnings, Webb attempts to show how the "structures of feeling" in Jane Austen, in the Brown novels and in *Hard Times* are conclusively and determinately, if not always apparently, related to the social changes of the Industrial Revolution. Novels are exposed as subtle forms of social history, as aspects of the "totality" of experience that industrial society represents. The argument ranges over the differing theories of value, both economic and moral, that the novelists betray in their work, and over the role of education and of social inferiority like Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* and Jane Eyre. Some annual issues get prominent treatments, such as where Charlotte Brontë researched the Luddite riots for *Shirley* and what Sir Thomas Bertram was really doing when absent from Mansfield Park in Antigua, in a final chapter more general issues such as the nineteenth-century novelists' impulse towards individualism of character when faced with the shock and disorder of the crowd are treated, and Foucault's history of punishment and surveillance is invoked.

These are weighty issues, many of which are topical in academic discussions. But Webb is not always either as lucid or as convincing as he might be and his choice of novels is surely too narrow, too familiar and too dependent on the old-fashioned critical values for one to feel that his case has been conclusively established.

# The Individual and his Times

Roy Fuller

I suppose I ought to start with my school days, spent mostly at private schools far less well equipped than the schools of any kind today. In the very early 1920s, when I was about 15 years old, a schoolmistress asked me to copy into notebooks lines of poetry that appealed to them. I was alarmed. There were no books of verse at home, and at school the only poetry I had access to was *Canto I* of Sir Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which we were "doing" in class. I copied into my notebook a sententious verse that I recalled my grandmother had written in my autograph album, and the following line from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: "O swiftly can speed my apple-green steed". Whether I ever added to this meagre anthology I do not recall.

I had read in the notes or (less likely) the teacher had expounded, that the movement of Scott's line imitated in its speed and undulation, the movement of the horse. The aptness greatly appealed to me, and rightly so, for its power to embody such gimmicks is an indication of poetry, differentiating it from prose.

Later in my schooldays, though short-story writing was what I longed to succeed at, I came to write a poem or two myself, output increasing after I left school at sixteen to become a solicitor's articled clerk - a "trainee solicitor" as it is genteelly termed today. At the age of four or five I had become passionately devoted to reading, still am. Myself providing reading matter seemed at first a way to fame along an agreeable road, I hoped it might in the end be a full-time occupation, as it was for the literary giants of my boyhood, G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett. In the result it remained for by far the greater part of my adult life a "spare-time" occupation. I always realized, of course, that my verse would never earn me a living, but it also turned out that my novels were too highbrow, or maybe just not good enough, to be popular.

It also turned out that my boyhood ended at the start of a world upheaval, which led to an upheaval in English writing, particularly the writing of poetry. The economic "bizzard" (as it was called) of 1929 and ensuing years produced not only mass unemployment but also the rise of Hitler, the spread of the barbarous and repressive phenomenon of fascism, the threat and finally the virtual certainty of a second world war. It cannot be said that before 1939 one lived in a just, prosperous and ordered England: I had arrived at socialist beliefs under my own steam at school, conscious of the injustices and illogicalities in the distribution of money and privileges in society. But that had not affected the kind of poetry I wrote, which I suppose aimed at depicting, embodying, "beautifying" (I put the word in inverted commas not to denigrate it (for undoubted concepts of the beautiful must enter into all creative activity) but to indicate the vagueness of my endeavour. All my poems of those days are fortunately lost, but some dealt with the beauty of the beloved, and with that of nature, and I guess most of them would try to use "beautiful" words in a "beautiful" way.

By 1932 my socialism had become "scientific socialism", that is Marxism. I believed that the wrong in society could be righted only through social revolution; that the threat of war could be removed only by the victory of the international working class; and that effective opposition to the Nazi and other fascist movements would only effectively come from radical left-wing parties, or under their leadership. By that date the poets W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis had published their early books, all containing verse concerned with social issues and political beliefs. One began to feel oneself a part of a how movement in literature, sharing a feeling echoed in the names of periodicals and anthologies of the time - *New Signatures*, *New Writing*, *New Country*, *New Verse*.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven." I did not feel in those early years of the 1930s as Wordsworth did about the French Revolution. Not at all. Almost from the start there were difficulties and unhappiness for the contemplative intellectual, which, after all, is what a poet is. In my own case I can feel quite simply with what, for others, became an issue of great moment and much apit ink. The belief in Marxism, with the usual corollary belief in the virtue of the existence and even all the actions of the Soviet Union, seemed to some a matter of faith. On losing that faith they felt deeply guilty at ever having held it. Particularly, perhaps, if they moved instead into religious beliefs. After the war, a collection of essays about this loss of faith in communism was indeed given the title *The God That Failed*. My own scepticism was slow-developing, not accompanied by any dramatic withdrawal from party politics, not turning into religiosity. I grew to be ambivalent about the goodness of mankind in the mass, and about state ownership and other things underlying socialism. I would guess that my attitude at the time of Stalin's death is quite well shown by my poem "Death of a Dictator": maybe I should by then have been more uncomplicatedly anti-Stalinist, but the sonnet hints at the far from straightforward feelings of the past.

A more lasting source of unease was the developing sense that, almost by definition, the "contemplative intellectual" was temperamentally and otherwise unfitted for political life and action. This may seem more trivial than the question of belief, and so indeed it is. Yet it exercised my mind both before and after the war, exercises it still to some extent, for the evils of the age go on presenting themselves as conquerable, at all, only by active steps to be taken by each individual - or, at any rate, as so pervasive and fundamental as to make taking no steps a matter of self-reproach. In my early days, when the new-found dogmas of scientific socialism seemed a complete answer to the world's ills, I despised any viewpoint short of utter Marxist belief, and committed political action on behalf of the working class. Before the war, Stephen Spender (whose poetry I much admired) advanced the idea that a poet might usefully and more honestly write from a standpoint of weakness - write out of his doubts about dogma, his flinching from action, his scruples about ruthlessness - but in those days I would have called this bourgeois softness, as would many young dogmatists still. Yet it may be said that in the end I wrote almost all my poetry from that standpoint or a similar one.

I excluded all those "dogmatic" poems, as too unsatisfactory, from my first collection of verse, *Poems*, which came out in 1939. If I looked at the world and the life of the poet pretty well hidden behind masks of poetic style and poetic forms. The book is a suitable reminder to us to bear in mind, when talking about the subject, that every poet cuts into English literature, as it were, at a certain point in the game, when all sorts of what may be called purely literary preoccupations exist. How can I get away from the heroic couplet? Some young poet might have asked himself in the early eighteenth century. In the early twentieth century plenty of poets decided to get away from the iambic pentameter. There is much - most - to poetry that is not ideology. Similarly it should be remembered that the "I" of the poem is not necessarily the poet himself, even when it seems to be. The poet would be an intolerable egotist if he did not feel that as a poet he wore a mask that more often than not resembles other men. I think that is why in his verse he can be free with the details of his personal life - give himself away as a lesson, not a confession.

The earliest poems in this selection are from the war years. Being called

up into the Royal Navy in 1941 made irrelevant for the time being the division between the withdrawn poet and the wicked world, the privileged solicitor and the under-privileged working man. It came to me quite soon that the poems I hoped to write about being in the armed forces should be relatively simple. Like Wilfred Owen in the First World War, I did not

could my remain for ever, or without guilt. But another poem of the same period, "Florestan to Leonora", shows how far I had come from the strict ideology of the early 1930s. Florestan is haunted in the idea of being freed into a just and happy world, having grown used to, been stimulated by, a world of dictatorial oppression, complicated art, and un-



Roy Fuller in 1941.

want, as he said, "to write anything to which a soldier would say No Comrade". "Waiting To Be Drafted" is a good example - even the form is simple, just the short last lines of the stanzas with the same rhyme. "YMCA Writing Room" is simple, too, especially if compared with many things in *Poems*, though Owen's soldier might have to ponder more. For instance, the "blues and reds" of the map are "dangerous" because blue indicates gas, dangerous in wartime, and red the British Empire (it existed then), empire being a phenomenon a socialist would consider as making for war.

I had a lucky war, and in 1946 returned to my pre-call-up position as a solicitor with a large building society, having published two collections of poetry during the war.

I will now enlarge on what I said earlier about the notion of writing poetry frankly from a position of weakness. I hope it would be too limiting to say that all my poetry since the war shows up the writer as an "ineffectual angel" (Matthew Arnold's phrase for Shelley), because it does take account of the ironies of the position, and does not pretend to have engagements with the world that its author lacks. "The Ides of March" perhaps puts the business in its starkest terms. Brutus, not quite the historical or Shakespearean Brutus, is presented as a previously uncommitted man about to throw in his lot with the terrorist faction. Contrary to what might be imagined, using a literary-historical character rather than making the "I" of the poem more personal, enables the subject to be treated with a good deal of enriching freedom. For instance, the poem refers to the legend that Brutus was Caesar's natural son, and so is brought in obliquely the Freudian idea of the Oedipus Complex - the repressed wish of a son to kill his rival father.

At this time, the mid-1950s, the personification so appealed to me that I called the collection in which "The Ides of March" appeared *Brutus's Oedipus*. The title was meant to indicate that in a sense all the poems were set in a place where the love for wife and children, and the wish to create, were threatened by tyrants, injustice - and the urgings of conspirators. In such a place one

long fingernails in "Pictures of Winter" (the latter possibly a hangover from my boyhood reading of the Dr Fu Manchu stories).

The admission by the poet, or the "I" of a poem, of doubts and ambivalences and so forth, is not always carried on in such solemn terms as those of Beethoven's opera or Shakespeare's Roman tragedy. The ironies of human existence extend to politics and sociology, nominally serious matters. In "Translation", the anti-radical viewpoint is exaggerated so as to aim the points home and provide amusement - though it may be hazardous that the author in real life sometimes had such thoughts himself. Again, in "Chimisme", the opposition between the characters of poet and man of business existing in the same human envelope, is put in a way that will divert, perhaps slightly shock, the reader: the actual possessor of such characters may be imagined to regard and combine them in a deeper and more subtle way.

Thinking about the poet's "masks", which may be found throughout my work (even the "elderly man" of later poems cannot be guaranteed to be the poet himself, though in this case I feel there is an obligation on the poet not to over-act), the extreme case may be thought to be the piece where the "I" is a parasite of the pig ("Autobiography of a Lung-worm").

The parallels between the decline of the Roman Empire and of institutions (including the British Empire) in the modern age, have encouraged me to don antique masks. This is especially true of "On the Mountain", where the Emperor Constantine's Rome has a distinctly up-to-date look, and the analogy between primitive Christianity and modern communism is exploited.

Soon after the war, the opposition between Russia and the West brought the threat of a new war, with a horrifying ingredient added - the atom bomb, which had already been senselessly dropped. As it turned out, the peace was prolonged, but I have expressed the fear of nuclear conflict in many post-war poems, perhaps too many, for the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki haunts me, and I am therefore apt to bring the business into poems which strictly do not demand it. It may be thought the last one and a half lines of "An English Summer" is such a case. Many of the sensations of living in these times are put in concentrated form in the separate quatrains of "Confrontation Off Korea, 1968", which was an actual historic incident that for some days seemed likely to bring about open hostilities between East and West.

The prolonged peace, and my own living into old age and going on writing, meant that my poetry has

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# The errant Empress

Norman Stone

BRITISH HANNAH  
Elizabeth, Kaiserin wider Willen  
659pp. Munich: Amalthea.  
3 85002 147 5

Empress Elizabeth of Austria was a legend in her life-time. She was by far the most glamorous consort of the nineteenth century. Her fiery-like beauty – so well captured by Winterhalter – and the air of tragedy that she carried around made her a first-class romantic heroine until her death, at the hands of an Italian anarchist, in 1898. Her husband, Emperor Franz Joseph, though finding consolation with a much more prosaic figure, Frau Schatt, never forgot Elizabeth. In his study, above his desk, there was a large portrait of her in her prime, in the 1860s, when she evoked the legendary Vienna of Strauss, waltzes, snow-bound castles and romantic escapades.

What lay behind Elizabeth's legend? Egon Caesar, Otto Corti, wrote a very good biography (translated into English in 1936). Brigitte Hamann has used a wider range of sources, even through a key-phrase – Elizabeth's letters to her mother – remains closed. She can afford to be less discreet than Corti was in revealing Habsburg family secrets, and thereby has a good biography. Elizabeth's son, the suicide Crown Prince Rudolf, in her name. The result is a considerable demolition-job. For Elizabeth exercised a malign influence on practically anything she came near to. She turned her husband into an automaton. She neglected her two elder children shamefully. She made life difficult even for people who tried to be helpful, and about the only positive achievement of her influence – the compromise with Hungary in 1867 – turned out to be something of a disaster.

In the last twenty years of her life, from the age of thirty to the age of fifty, Elizabeth became one of Europe's great wanderers, drifting to Hungary, to England, to Ireland – anywhere, rather than at home with her husband and children, whose Christmas she seems quite often to have missed. Rudolf, caught between a cold and distant mother and a marionette father, became a nervous wreck. Gisela, the eldest child, bore her mother to tears precisely from the moment of her birth, and was neglected thereafter. She was married off to Prince Leopold of Bavaria. Of her first child, Elizabeth's first grand-daughter, the empress wrote that the baby was "of a rare ugliness". The one child that evoked any warmth in Elizabeth was the younger daughter, Marie Valerie, who was conceived in a brief resumption of physical relations, to mark the new agreement with Hungary.

It is evident from this book that the one person Elizabeth hated about was herself. The famous beauty was the outcome of a lavishly-mounted operation, which left little time for anything else. Her waist was exceedingly narrow – twenty inches – and even then the empress would have herself laced up (it took an hour) so far that she could hardly breathe. She weighed only 110 pounds, though her height was almost six feet. This was achieved by dieting on a heroic scale, and by constant use of gymnastic equipment, which was installed in the residences everywhere. At night Elizabeth would wear masks of fresh strawberries; she would drink five or six whiffs of egg with salt in order to keep her face free from the ravages that dieting might have caused. To keep the empress's hair in proper condition was an enormous job. The hair grew in her ankles; to wash it took a whole day, and even the ordinary day's hair-dressing took three hours. The hair-dressing had previously been employed in the Burgtheater, where her work impressed Elizabeth, and she was engaged by the Court at a salary larger than a university professor's.

The empress's day makes extraordinary reading: most of it spent

in dressing, or exercising, or having her hair prepared, after which there would be half-an-hour's family dinner and an early retirement to gossip with a Hungarian maid, Ida Ferenczy (who destroyed her correspondence with Elizabeth although, from a surviving fragment, we hear Elizabeth tell her "I think of you a thousand times as my hair is being dressed"). The one positive outcome – if it can so be described – was a certain quantity of shilly shally verse, which Elizabeth took seriously enough to have deposited in Switzerland as a "literary archive". Miss Hamann refers to herself as "Titania" and to her husband as a "third of ill omen" (Pechvogel). "I'm going to kill myself", she told him. "Then you'll go to hell", he answered. "I'm there already", she said – all of it in front of her adolescent daughter. No love-affairs seem – according to Miss Hamann – to have enlivened this empty existence, although Elizabeth sometimes kept some bluff, hearty horse-riding gentlemen on the bill for a time. The wife of one of them, "Ray" Middleton, destroyed the empress's correspondence in a jealous fury. Did it really contain much?

It fits that Elizabeth was quite hard-headed when it came to money. She secreted funds, through the Rothschilds, in Switzerland "just in case". She kept savings accounts in Vienna, under pseudonyms, and played the stock exchange. But her sense of public duties was minimal. She appeared for the Silver Wedding looking, Court gossip has it, "like an Indian widow about to be burnt". She refused to turn up for the Gala opening of the Vienna Opera in 1869. A special session had been constructed for her, and the opening – a

# The erratic Emperor

Michael Balfour

JOHN C. G. RÖHL and NICOLAUS SOMBAART (Editors)  
Kaiser Wilhelm II:  
New Interpretations  
319pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£19.50.  
0 521 23898 6

For the treatment of a character who has been the subject of five English biographies in eighteen years, "relative neglect" may seem a surprising term. Yet in the case of Kaiser Wilhelm II, it is justifiable. For the books in question were all written by amateurs and based upon secondary sources (though those included substantial printed collections of German and British diplomatic documents). The Kaiser still awaits the treatment given to his English relatives by Sir Sidney Lee, Sir Harold Nicolson and Sir John Wheeler-Bennett.

There are several reasons for this apparent snub. Until 1941, a full study was ruled out not only because documents were still inaccessible but also because the subject was still alive. After the Kaiser's death Germany and the world were for some time in no mood to make the necessary interest of historians, particularly to personalities to society and structures of the eleven countries to the present volume, only three are German and none of them holds a chair at a University. But also the composition of a thoroughgoing study of Wilhelm II based both on all the archival evidence and on descriptions by his contemporaries would be a mammoth task. Although two of the biographers are said to have had access to the Kaiser's papers, the definitive study will probably be through a series of monographs, as in this collection of essays.

The expectation of finding fresh archival evidence in this collection is enhanced by its claim to contain "new interpretations". These, however, may well be disappointed. Some of what is said here has been said

performance of *Don Giovanni* – was put off to suit her. Even then, although she was in Vienna, she refused to appear, saying that it was "inconvenient". From time to time, she did make the rounds of military hospitals. But she had no sense of how to behave or of what to say. Besides, she was deeply unhappy in her teeth, and disliked opening her mouth, so that no-one could understand what she said. "Are you married?" she asked one soldier. "Often", came the reply. "Do you have children?" she said. "From time to time", answered the soldier. She was also not above humiliating Franz Joseph in public. "He was so spoilt when young that it's the only way to get anything out of him", she explained. There, she was probably right. With all of her neurosis, hypochondria, petulance, treacherous obsessions and contempt for anything that mattered, he remained devoted to her. "Your nussikin", he signed himself. He plodded on through his work-filled day in the vain hope of a kind word from her.

In one matter, we can sympathize with Elizabeth. She detested and despised the rigid Court life of Vienna, in which a variety of officials kept watch over the minutiae of an exceptionally cumbersome and simplest and most homely details stages. A family dinner, for instance, must have been hell. No-one was allowed to speak unless spoken to by the emperor, and no-one was allowed to go on eating after the emperor had finished. But since Franz Joseph gobbled down his food and never ate much in any case, there was never much dinner and seldom any talk. Napoleon III was so bored that he started doing prestidigitation with the

empress's plates, explaining, later, that he had learnt that kind of thing in his fair-ground youth. People tumbled out of these dinners surviving, and Sacher's Hotel bloomed in that era from hungry Archdukes. The only person who ever got round this problem was the poetess-queen of Romania, "Carmen Sylva", who gushed and fluted at Franz Joseph until well past his bed-time. He never forgave her.

Elizabeth was assassinated in Geneva in 1898 by an Italian anarchist, Luchini. He was a proto-Mussolini, one of the pieces of flotsam (Gavrilo Princip was another) thrown up by the social changes of the late nineteenth century. He had meant to assassinate the French President, but his visit to Geneva was cancelled. Luchini did not have the money to go to Rome and murder King Umberto who was murdered the following year, at Monza, by someone else. Elizabeth was third on the list, for she, fortuitously, was in Geneva. She was killed with a file that Luchini had whittled down to razor-sharpness.

Miss Hamann does not end this long and depressing book with any conclusions. But some can perhaps be drawn. It was part of Elizabeth's tragedy – and not of hers alone – that she lived in an era when monarchy was losing its significance. She herself knew this well enough. The Habsburg Empire, she said, was "the wreckage of old grandeur". She agreed with "Carmen Sylva" that republics were "the only reasonable form of state". The ceremonial through which she stumbled was, to her, quite tedious and burdensome. In an earlier epoch, the ceremonial

would have been virtually second-nature, just as would the role of consort to a man she did not love. Her mother-in-law, Archduchess Sophie, though married to a foolish bore, knew quite well what her place in the world was: she could devote herself unthinkingly to it, caring for her husband, his public functions, her children and seeking religious solace for the disappointments she had to endure.

Elizabeth was not like that. She had inherited, from her native Bavaria, the heady notions of German romanticism. Her father, Duke Max in Bayern, counted as a liberal, contemptuous of religion and the proprieties he had several of his eight illegitimate children to live in his residence, and spent most of his time with them, rather than with his wife and her brood. Elizabeth's three sisters went, each in their own way, badly off the tracks: one, the Queen of Naples, had a baby by a Belgian officer of the Papal guard; another, Duchess of Alençon, fell madly in love, at the age of forty with a middle-aged married doctor from Graz. The monarchical sense of duty, which kept courts together in earlier ages, was becoming meaningless in the middle nineteenth century; in the next two generations there was an extraordinarily long list of runaways, syphilis, revolutionaries, exhibitionists, and dynasties outside western Europe. The old order, in the sense of ceremonial, duty, and religion, went in 1848. Elizabeth was one of the casualties. Her dreary, destructive life was in marked contrast to the happy atmosphere of earlier Habsburg Courts. No doubt Franz Joseph was a Karenin-figure. But Elizabeth became her own Vronsky.

before. Dr Kohut for example writes:

Although it is pointless of course to speculate about what might have happened had Friedrich lived longer or his father died sooner, one can argue that, given German political realities and the personalities of Victoria and Friedrich, the realisation of the ideal implicit in their marriage may well have been doomed from the start.

In *The Kaiser and His Times* the present reviewer wrote:

The prospect [of what might follow from the marriage of Fritz and Vicky] was frustrated by the arbitrary way in which Death dealt and withholds his blows. If William and the Prince Consort had both lived for the threescore and two years allotted by the Psalmist – and no more, if Fritz had lived as long as his father, much would certainly have been changed. But just how much? Can the course of history really depend on such a limited number of heart-beats? Were not forces at work in Germany strong enough to have frustrated Fritz even if he could have met them in his full vigour?

A further disappointment is that some of the new material from the archives (especially those at Windsor) proves to say much the same things as have been published already. Thus a letter at Windsor from the Crown Princess to her mother is given as the authority for Queen Victoria's belief that her daughter took maternal responsibility too far. But just such a letter was published by Ponsonby in 1928. The Queen's anger with Wilhelm's marriage is similarly attributed. Count Corti published the letter in 1954.

John Röhl certainly produces details which invalidate my belief (shared by Wheeler-Bennett) that there was no worthwhile evidence of Wilhelm ever having been unfaithful. These episodes, dated all the same from before his accession and are admitted to have been trivial; they do not seriously affect the picture of Wilhelm as a moral man – which is characterised (there is no discussion of his relationship with Countess von Waldegg). The Eulenburg letters

while Professor Röhl has so carefully edited certainly show that for many years the Count stood closer to Wilhelm and exercised a more continuous influence on him than did anybody else – but this is confirmation rather than new discovery. What would have been welcome (and what may come in the third volume of the letters) is a discussion of the Kaiser's conduct over the Eulenburg trial.

In an essay on the Kaiser and his military entourage, Wilhelm Delst brings his extensive knowledge of German military history to illuminate the *Kommmandogewalt*. But although much of the detail is new and welcome, not only has the new constitutional position of the "All-Highest" been various army and naval commanders who did or said what, the extent to which a theory fits the known facts about a given personality must remain largely a matter of judgment. There may well be readers who will regard as far-fetched Nicolaus Sombart's explanation of the extent to which homosexuality was rampant in Imperial Germany, which he characterizes as a male society that pushed to an extreme unknown anywhere else in Europe the repression of the feminine. I found it interesting and plausible and would say the same about Kohut's identification of Wilhelm's mental condition as "narcissism" (though perhaps in his forthcoming book he will explain more fully what psychologists understand by that term). Such an explanation switches attention back again to Wilhelm's relations with his parents and particularly his mother; it was her lack of affection and encouragement, combined with the tendency to domineer, which was the fundamental cause of his insecurity, and that insecurity was the fundamental cause of his erratic and impetuous behaviour.

May it not be that this insecurity and deprivation set up a tension which was too strong to be repressed and which, if it had not been allowed to find an outlet in irrational acts, would have led to lasting paranoia? Professor Röhl positively says that, although Wilhelm wasted everything about him to be big, he only had little breakdowns. And any explanation of his character must take into account the impression one often receives that underneath there was a shrewd, humorous and even tolerant character who was observing with a critical and almost disapproving eye the antics of his more superficial self. Some contributor to this volume might with advantage have repeated the Kaiser's remark to Bülow, "I know you wish me well but I am what I am and cannot change."

personnel change, generally seems to have been able to do so. Did this amount to "personal rule"? And in what respect is the interpretation new?

Paradoxically the direction in which the book does break new ground is not in bringing forward new evidence but in applying the theories of psychology to the Kaiser and his surroundings. But whereas we can, by comparing sources, usually establish for certain who did or said what, the extent to which a theory fits the known facts about a given personality must remain largely a matter of judgment. There may well be readers who will regard as far-fetched Nicolaus Sombart's explanation of the extent to which homosexuality was rampant in Imperial Germany, which he characterizes as a male society that pushed to an extreme unknown anywhere else in Europe the repression of the feminine. I found it interesting and plausible and would say the same about Kohut's identification of Wilhelm's mental condition as "narcissism" (though perhaps in his forthcoming book he will explain more fully what psychologists understand by that term). Such an explanation switches attention back again to Wilhelm's relations with his parents and particularly his mother; it was her lack of affection and encouragement, combined with the tendency to domineer, which was the fundamental cause of his insecurity, and that insecurity was the fundamental cause of his erratic and impetuous behaviour.

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## LINGUISTICS

ROBERT E. INNIS

Karl Bühler: Semiotic Foundations of Language Theory

168pp. New York: Plenum. N.Y.  
0 306 40781 4

The name of Karl Bühler, whose very original paper on "The Axiomatization of the Language Sciences" Robert Innis here translates for the first time into English half a century after its publication in *Kain Studien*, is not one which nowadays looms large in the study of language. But there are signs, including this translation and Innis's introductory essay on "Key Themes in Bühler's Language Theory", of a revival of interest in his work.

As professor of psychology at the University of Vienna during the 1930s, Bühler was among the most influential European intellectuals who attempted to take the development of linguistic theory beyond the positions established by Saussure in the *Cours de linguistique générale*. Bühler's work was recognized as important not only by psychologists but also by linguists and philosophers. Trubetzkoy acknowledged an indebtedness to Bühler in his own work on phonology. Cassirer cited Bühler's analyses as corroborating the treatment of language proposed in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. Popper wrote of reading Bühler as an event of great significance in his own development as a philosopher. Jakobson took over and expanded Bühler's analysis of the functions of speech. But today few students of language have any detailed acquaintance with Bühler's writings.

The reasons for this lapse into obscurity Innis does not go into, apart from observing that except in the German-language countries, "the trajectories of twentieth century linguistics and language theory have not followed Bühler's work". If they had, things might have worked out

better: the barren bi-planar theories which dominate much of contemporary linguistics might never have become so firmly entrenched.

In his exposition of Bühler's views, Innis understandably concentrates upon Bühler's principle of abstractive relevance and the distinction between index field and symbol field. He relates these notions on the one hand to Gestalt Theory and on the other to the descriptive application of linguistic field theory by Trier. He points out how Bühler's "dialectic of situation" and "context in language use" and his insistence on the social matrix of language and the primacy of action are in many respects close to and anticipate the later Wittgenstein.

His essay also examines Bühler's discussion of the views of Mill and Husserl. For Bühler the difference between the two was of great significance. Husserl offered a theory of meaning which was an "act" theory. Mill, by contrast, presented an "organon" theory: Bühler's main objection to Husserl was that the Husserlian "language consciousness" could not be explained other than as something already derived from the intersubjective exchange of linguistic signs. A "subjectively intending consciousness" would have nothing to intend – at least, not to intend linguistically – without taking language for granted as a social practice. Hence, Bühler held, "linguistic research has a great interest in being permitted, in the sense of a Millian analysis, axiomatically to place the fact of the intersubjective exchange of signs at the starting point of its analyses".

There is a great deal here that might, profitably have been commented on, even briefly, but which is passed over in silence. Is the distinction between an "act" theory and an "organon" theory genuinely a distinction between theories in conflict? Why did this chicken-and-egg problem about the relative priority of the individual and

# The exchange of signs

Roy Harris

the social come to be one of the great hang-ups of language theory in the first half of the twentieth century? How was Bühler's backing of Mill versus Husserl tied up with his objections to Saussure? (For some people might suppose, not unreasonably, that a principal merit of Saussurean linguistics was to have reconciled within the same theoretical framework the notion of *la langue* as the possession of the individual and the notion of *la parole* as the possession of the community.)

One thing Bühler saw which Saussure failed to see was the significance of the phenomenon of metaphor. To this topic he devoted an important section of his *Sprachtheorie*, and Innis's essay rightly does likewise. Echoing Quintilian's view that "poena omne dictum metaphora est", Bühler held that there is nothing exceptional about metaphor. On the contrary, "every linguistic composite is metaphorical in some degree". Innis compares this with the approach to metaphor taken by a number of later writers, including Michael Polanyi and Nelson Goodman.

Bühler's clarification of how language works involved comparing language with non-linguistic representational systems. This is another mark of his originality which Innis discusses in some detail. The comparison of word sequences in discourse with the flow of images in (silent) cinematography is an illuminating parallel which Bühler used to throw light upon such topics as anaphora and narration. The way Bühler exploited the analysis of the film theorist Béla Balázs here is both an exemplary and a prophetic instance of how fruitful a semiological framework for language studies might be.

More could and should have been said about Bühler's brief but crucial critique of Saussure. For Bühler saw the importance and implications of some of Saussure's observations probably more clearly than Saussure

did himself, and he tried to distinguish between what was sound in the *Cours de linguistique générale* and what Saussure had been tempted to say, as Bühler put it, "in his weak moments". It is a pity that Innis misses the opportunity of an exegesis of the opening sentence of the "Axiomatization" paper, where three eminently Saussurean themes are immediately introduced: (i) that every language is a system of signs, (ii) that the sounds of language are posited by the speaker as signs and received by the hearer as signs, and (iii) that the phenomenon of language arises as the mediator between individuals in the exchange of signs. Whereas Saussure saw languages as a centrally important class of semiotic systems, Bühler in this first sentence already goes much further. For him, these three theses offer ways in which "we can begin to speak about language". In other words, he sees the point that Saussurean semiology is not itself a science, but rather the systematization of a certain essential mode of discourse about language.

It is unfortunate that Innis takes his Saussure quotations from the Baskin translation of the *Cours de linguistique générale*, where Saussure's essential theoretical distinctions are blurred by rendering *la langue* simply as *language* (with no accompanying definite or indefinite article). Thus, for example, Innis represents Bühler's understanding of Saussure's position as being the following: "from the very outset we must put both feet on the ground of language and use language as the norm of all the other manifestations of speech". Here speech translates Saussure's *parole*. However, to make confusion doubly sure, Innis then cites Bühler's own dual rendering of Saussure's *langue* as (i) *speech capability* and (ii) *actual human speech*.

What is important is that Bühler *qua* psychologist rejected the false psychologizing implicit in Saussure's

theory: in particular, the insistence that *la langue* exists somewhere inside people's heads, and the notion that it essentially involves associations between "sound images" and "meanings". Bühler's criticisms are just as pertinent to the modern fashion for talking about languages as systems of "internalized rules" linking "phonetic representations" to "semantic representations".

This brings us, finally, to what is perhaps the most disappointing feature of Innis's essay: his vague concluding remarks to the effect that Bühler's approach to language may after all turn out to be compatible with Chomsky's. Innis is clearly uneasy about a "certain affinity" between Bühler's position and that of the American structuralism dismissed by Chomsky and his school as untenable. For Innis, this "affinity" appears to cast an awkward doubt over Bühler's reputation as a linguistic theorist and may even, one supposes, preclude ultimate canonization as an honorable precursor of generative linguistics. This is a way that puts the cart before the horse. For the plain fact is that already in the 1930s Bühler had a far clearer concept of the essential creativity of language and the absurdity of representing languages as fixed codes than either Saussure or Saussure's latter-day transformationalist successors. In Bühler's view, as Innis pertinently remarks, what is abundantly clear is that "language was not a form of abstract algebra". Are we to take that as a criticism?

Edward Arnold have recently published a collection of eighteen essays to mark the sixtieth birthday of F. R. Palmer. *Linguistic Controversies*, edited by David Crystal (257pp., £18.50, 0 7131 6349 6) is divided into five sections: "General Issues", "Phonetics", "Phonology", "Psycholinguistics" and "Applications". The book also contains a bibliography of Palmer's published work.

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# In pursuit of the king

Valerie Pearl

ANTHONY FLETCHER

The Outbreak of the English Civil War  
440pp. Edward Arnold. £24.  
0 7151 6320 N

It is currently fashionable to argue that in the seventeenth-century Parliament was not the champion of parliamentary liberty and constitutional monarchy depicted by Whig historians, but a weak and ineffectual assembly obsessed by local interests and rivalries and unconcerned with ideological or political goals. Elizabethan and early Stuart Parliaments, it has been pointed out, even failed to exploit their traditional control over the financial supply to force redress of grievances. In the light of such evidence, some historians have concluded that the Civil War could not have been brought about by structural *disfigurement* nor by the activities of a radical "opposition", but that conflict was precipitated by the Court's adoption of a new anti-puritan religious creed, the high church Arminianism. This new creed, it has been said, amounted to a religious "revolution", which met with almost unanimous opposition from the nation. The unanimity of the opposition of the King losted, we are told, almost until the autumn of 1641.

Aware of these new investigations, Anthony Fletcher has not concerned himself directly with some of their implications. This has had the effect of leaving unexplained certain elements in the story which this scholarly and valuable book tells. First he narrows the events of the conflict between the King and Parliament which began in less than two years had turned into armed conflict in the counties; then he considers the preparation for war and its progress in the localities down to 1643. He tells the story for the most part with a minimum of comment or sides, and reveals a Parliament very different in temper from earlier ones. Here was a body that was radical, aggressive and persistent in its pursuit of Charles and his ministers. It was guided by strong leadership from the floor. It was not the unanimous body described in other recent accounts: events in and out of the House were for too complex for that.

There were obvious divisions of opinion in Parliament right from the start, despite the traditional reluctance of members to admit to them. S. R. Gardiner exaggerated the unity of the first session, which lasted from November 1640 to August 1641. Pym's efforts to organize it, according to Mr Fletcher, resulted in "a pot-boiled wrestling-mat". The House of Commons was even more difficult to control before August 1641 than it was in the later session. Anyone who has read the printed diaries of the Long Parliament will be aware of these divisions, but this book is the first to reveal in print their extent. There were strongly conflicting views in the House on nearly all major matters of debate: the attainder of Strafford, the Root and Branch petition, the proposal to give Parliament a negative control over the choice of King's ministers (over Pym as early as May 1641), the Triennial Bill and the various plans (again first aired as early as the spring of 1641) for taking the militia out of the hands of the crown. Although not quoted for this purpose by the author, the so-called "unanimous" Act for the Commission and of Star Chamber began as measures to reform those institutions, but by 1641 they had, according to Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, "were suddenly and unexpectedly transformed into more radical Acts for abolition."

It is difficult to convey the wealth of incident with which Fletcher illustrates these events. He is particularly successful in showing the pressures which brought about the attainder of Strafford. At these debates, little more than half the House of Commons was present. Time and again, the managers were outnumbered by the Earl's supporters. So, like Edward Hyde, spoke against Strafford in the vain hope that collaboration might

eventually bring a reprieve. Arthur Capel later attributed his own similar action to "the basic fear of a prevailing party". The customs farmer Alderman Sir Henry Garway may have hoped by his evidence against the Earl to ward off the charge of delinquency against himself. Fifty-eight MPs supported Strafford at the end. The majority for the attainder in the Lords was only eleven, a somewhat pyrrhic victory achieved after intense and well organized pressure had been extended in the London streets and around the Palace of Westminster.

Speed, which had been the essence of the attack on Strafford, also characterized the passage of Pym's legislative programme. A succession of measures went rapidly through a House unused in the past thirty years to the passing of important legislative measures. One of the more radical, the proposed negative control over the King's ministers, was partly dropped or at least modified by Pym in May 1641 when he snuffed opposition, but was Remonstrance in November 1641 in the wake of the fears engendered by the Irish rebellion. There was no control of the House and that man was not the right hand of Charles. Even before the House assembled Pym's eminence was acknowledged. Sir Synnods D'Ewes, for example, wrote to him before the opening of Parliament exclaiming himself for missing the first week of session. Pym also showed from the parliamentary leader of the middle that he would demonstrate again in 1642 and 1643: he revealed his political temperament when he shelved the controversial Bill to reform the Church in June 1641 in order to unite the Houses on the more pressing political task of securing the exclusion of the Bishops from the House of Lords. The desire of Pym and other leading figures to soft-pedal on religious change seems to support the view expressed by contemporaries such as Oliver Cromwell, John Corbet and others that forms of ecclesiastical government at any rate were not the

first thing contended for in these turbulent years, and to give substance too to Clarendon's remark that Pym was not "of that furious resolution against the Church" that characterized some of his colleagues.

Although Fletcher does not sit in judgment on men and events, he is explicit about one of the methods used by Pym and the leaders to win parliamentary support: the exploitation of the plots, both papist and royal, which were exploited by Pym and covered briefly in the manipulation of the crowd, the early organization of demonstrations and petitions in 1640 and 1641, and the secret negotiations between the Scots and Pym and his associates going back to at least 1637. The collaboration with the City of London and the divisions within that body are very briefly touched upon; it is a pity that Fletcher omits, for example, the crucial conflict over the

election of Sheriffs in June 1641, the outcome of which would in part determine who controlled the streets of the city and its juries in the fatal days ahead. There is no explanation of the City's rapid politicization in 1641. A future edition might note that the Lord Mayor in 1640-41 was not Sir Henry Gerway but Sir Edmund Wright.

In his conclusion, Fletcher points to the paradoxical nature of these stonishing events. Why did men who were conservative by temperament, who genuinely wished to preserve the

monarchy, the constitution and the whole social fabric move so rapidly towards civil war? Such decisions were not a feature of the pre-1640 Parliaments. Admittedly, Parliaments had not been called for eleven years and much had happened to sharpen the hindsight to ask whether men capable of the skill and political daring of these MPs could have been in the 1630s the undirected provincials described in the 1640s. It is possible in interpreting and to forget that when Pym and his colleagues drew back from a bold gesture in the earlier years they may have done so not because they had no wish to challenge the crown but because their supporters were flagging: there are many such examples in the Long Parliament.

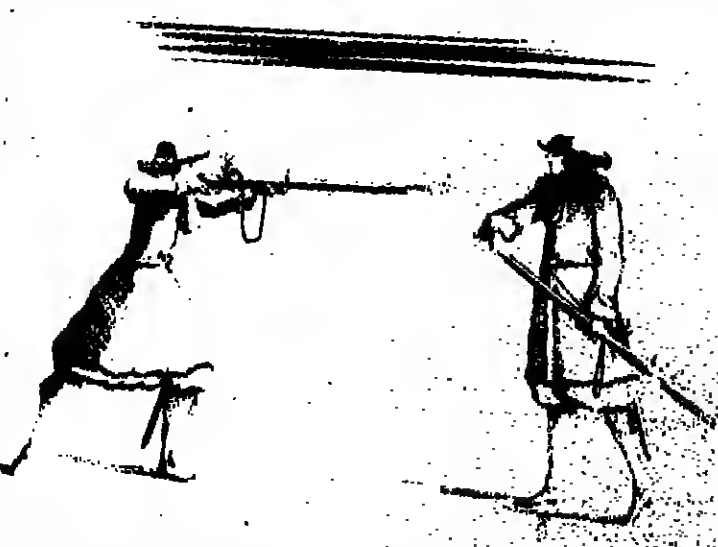
The author points out that in 1641 the leaders of Parliament laid the groundwork for taking over the central administration of the country, particularly by their reform of taxation: by 1643 Pym had achieved a strong administrative machine, capable of financing the war on the King and imposing peace on the counties. To this extent he had solved the immediate problem of government that faced the Stuarts. It was an extraordinary achievement for a body of men who, we have been told, were greatly interested in national affairs, were positively opposed to strengthening central institutions and wholly against paying for them. Of course 1641-42 individuals were constantly outpaced by the unpredictable pull and push of events. Nevertheless we are bound to conclude that either Pym was a charismatic genius, who mesmerized narrow-minded and parochial parliamentarians into accepting measures they didn't care for or didn't understand, or more simply, an able politician who understood how to exploit the members' genuine concern for parliamentary liberties and for the preservation of property, views which had been expressed however falteringly on the floor of the Commons and outside it for at least a couple of generations.

Day by day parliament was taking control of munitions, and garrisons and money. Behind the long discussions about Hull, the Tower of London, and the guarding of parliament, we can see the differences of outlook. There were still no royalists or parliamentarians: there were those for whom the peace of the kingdom was more important than further opposition, and those who believed that the king must be deprived of military power before he could use it against parliament. D'Ewes, as Anthony Fletcher's recent study puts it, was "the weather-vane of moderate opinion" and his journal became a record of "the mood and fortunes of the indecisive peace party". Moore was a future regicide.

But apart from D'Ewes's devotion to his own speeches the differences in selection and emphasis are less apparent than the unexplained gaps in each that the other reveals. Neither offers much comment on the managing group surrounding Pym that is supposed to have established its domination, nor on how far a stable pattern of voting had arisen. They do show, in the joint picture of the ordinary MPs' day, how parliament was moving towards its brief experience of true government. In what the editors call a "bewildering maze" of committees, the two Houses were taking over more and more of the functions of the king's Council and the Exchequer. In those two months D'Ewes and Moore each sat on a score of committees, men like Pym and Holles no far more. Gradually the parliamentary administrators who ran the country during the war were developing their methods. It was a hard life and we can appreciate the joy of D'Ewes when in the Hall on 10th November he found not a tumult but a feast and commons. "We had great cheer."

The House itself avidly swallowed the rumour that about the country - a Mr Blount said there were trunks of "should be" arms in them. He also revealed that Cecil Cave had said: "There were thirty thousand French soldiers in 'Plebury' who could be transported to Dover. Every story was investigated. It all helped to sustain the atmosphere in which the kingdom could be put into a 'posture of defence' with no admission that it could mean defence against the King."

These two months, from the fiasco of Charles's attempted arrest of the "five members" to the passing without his assent of the measure to take control of the militia, are often picked as the inevitable though the same is said of many earlier crises. None of the diarists gives an impression of decisive doubt, midlife, and a moderate amount of hypocrisy. Parliament in the past year had experienced some



An illustration of military principles from the first edition of Francesco Marzotti's *Precetti Militari*, 1670. One of several books on warfare in a sale of valuable printed books and atlases of the fifteenth to the seventeenth century held at Sotheby's on Tuesday June 15.

## Members' momentos

Donald Pennington

WILLSON H. COATES, ANNE STEELE YOUNG and VERNON F. SNOW (Editors)

The Private Journals of the Long Parliament: 3 January to 5 March 1642  
351pp. Yale University Press. £42.  
0 300 02545 9

All politicians ought to study seventeenth-century parliaments, and especially the Long Parliament of 1640-1653. For the first forty years of the century there was a fair chance that parliament would not survive. By 1700 it was, in the great decision, that parliament governed the country and that those who elected MPs were all political parties and government by ministers and bureaucrats took but its essential shape was already there. Parliament could debate, it could not rule.

Between the fall of absolutist monarchy and the rise of the illusory greatest power and greatest abundance, it comes partly from the Journals into a detailed record of decisions, partly from members who assiduously published their own diaries, and above all from the taking notes of proceedings was an indefatigable diarist of all, Sir Synnods D'Ewes, had himself edited the diaries of Elizabethan parliaments. Now, his inkhorn and paper working "to

preserve the memory of things past to posterity". He earned his greater gratitude by making a fair copy, in 1925 Wallace Nutting produced a splendid professional volume covering the first three months of D'Ewes's journal - of the Long Parliament. In 1942 Willson H. Coates brought out a similar volume for October 1641 to January 1642. In 1982 the continuation of this, which Coates had prepared before his death, has been completed.

"Any calculation from this that a complete D'Ewes may be available in the next millennium but one would be unjust. The diary-editing industry, produced some admirable volumes for the earlier parliaments of the century. The technique, his improved too. Diarists other than D'Ewes were where they had essential additions; they now appear on equal terms for the House (sometimes to buy with a friend skilled in eastern languages) he often refers the reader to together, and exchanged notes. Thomas Peyton, Roger Hill, and laconic, are generally more speciously and, with welcome defiance of the pedants, in modernized spelling.

These two months, from the fiasco of Charles's attempted arrest of the "five members" to the passing without his assent of the measure to take control of the militia, are often picked as the inevitable though the same is said of many earlier crises. None of the diarists gives an impression of decisive doubt, midlife, and a moderate amount of hypocrisy. Parliament in the past year had experienced some

## Against the establishment

G. M. Carstairs

ROBERT CASTEL, FRANÇOISE CASTEL and ANNE LOVELL  
The Psychiatric Society  
380pp. Columbia University Press:  
\$22.80.  
0 231 05244 8

In multi-authored works of non-fiction it is customary for the authors to declare their several contributions and their special fields of interest. This gesture has not been followed in *The Psychiatric Society*. The reader has to discover that Robert Castel is a professor of sociology at the University of Paris VIII, while Françoise Castel is a psychiatrist at the "Center Hospital of Corbeil-Essonnes" and Anne Lovell a fellow at the psychiatric epidemiology program at Columbia University. This information is not given in the text, but on the dust-cover, which informs us that Robert Castel is also the author of *L'ordre psychiatrique* (1973) and *Le psychiatrie* (1976). The unsigned, and presumably triple-authored, preface to the original French edition tells us: "This book might have been entitled *Travels in America*, for in one respect it is a report of a journey. Two of us toured the United States for more than a year, working out of three main centers: San Francisco, New York and Boston. . . . Our predominant feeling on returning to France was one of perplexity. This no doubt refers to Robert and Françoise Castel, although two other permutations are not excluded. The preface goes on: "One of us is an American, Anne Lovell founded a free clinic in 1970 and later took part, as a board member of the Louisiana American Civil Liberties Union and of various community organizations in the efforts to reform mental hospitals and prisons that grew out of the civil rights struggles of the nineteen-sixties throughout the United States."

The reader is still left wondering what were the respective contributions of the three authors. They imply, though they nowhere explicitly state, that they are of one mind in their hostility towards the psychiatric establishment of which one of them is a (presumably reluctant) staff member. Their history of the rise of psychiatry in the United States to the point where, in their view, it moulds American society as much as do the Pentagon and the State Department, is a sustained exercise in anti-psychiatry. Like the majority of writers in this vein they argue that all contemporary social institutions are inherently repressive: only those of the counter-culture are sincere, unadorned towards social deviants and exempt from the desire to impose social controls upon those who turn to them for help. To put it as bluntly as this implies that they share a paranoid perception of the social organization of mental health care. It is true that they frequently appear to do just that: for example, at the end of their chapter on "The psychiatricization of differences" they conclude a discussion of the use of behavioural modification with this statement: "As long as an authoritarian repression of nonconformist behaviour was carried on in the name of an openly repressive ideology, what was at stake politically was clear. But when repression is carried out in the guise of treatment or to the yielding of society, there is a temptation to believe in the good intentions of those offering to provide services."

This is a temptation against which the authors are stoutly armed; but to do them justice they are also candid in describing how rapidly experiments in alternative ways of helping nonconformists can degenerate from their original generous intentions into quelling and failure. Good intentions are laudable, but not enough.

The main body of the book is devoted to an account of the early stages of psychiatry, leading up to its over-eager acceptance in the United States in the years following the Second World War. Their historical approach is decidedly *à la mode*. "First

there was a founding father, Benjamin Rush, who shared in the role that legend attributes to Pinel and Tuke" - but Benjamin Rush is better known as one of those who signed the Declaration of Independence than for his contributions to psychiatry; and the influence of Pinel and Tuke in humanizing the care of the mentally ill was based on historical records of their accomplishments at the Bicêtre in Paris and the Retreat in York, not merely on their "legends".

The authors are also guilty of exaggeration in stating that a "rage for psychoanalysis swept the United States" following Freud's lectures at Clark University in 1909. They go on to point out that the first fifteen members of the New York Psychoanalytic Society were all doctors, "graduates of the leading schools in America or had been trained abroad (nine had been born outside of the United States, and seven of these were Jews)". It is difficult to make out which of these distributors is the most heinous - to be doctors, silens or Jews. The fact remains that for three decades after Freud's visit to Boston psychoanalysis remained on the fringe of medical teaching. Their numbers grew during the 1930s because several leading analysts came to the United States to escape from Hitler, but it was only after 1945 that psychoanalytic training became a virtual prerequisite of career advancement for psychiatrists in the leading medical schools and in private practice.

A similar oversimplification is apparent in the assertion that the United States have turned the task of social integration into a merely technical matter, an applied technology: "American technicians have opened up new frontiers in the control and standardization of human beings." This is a partial truth; it needs to be qualified by recalling that few other societies have been so active in encouraging their citizens to explore and realize their innate potential.

Repeatedly, during their accounts of changes in popular opinion towards analytic psychotherapy and towards the very different worlds of the State Hospitals and their Community Mental Health Centers, the authors seem to be on the verge of giving some credit for a measure of enlightenment, even of concern for their patients, to a few rare psychiatrists such as Adolph Meyer and William A. White - only to choke back this impulse with a timely qualification: that Meyer and White were at once psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and hygienists and thereby less tainted than their colleagues. They also hold it against White that he was a former medical superintendent of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, which in 1959 inspired Erving Goffman's description of the "total institution". Is it devious to say that the authors (and here it must surely be the writer of *Le Psychiatrie* who is at the helm) accuse both White and Meyer of encouraging a "filtration" between psychoanalysis and behaviourism in 1910 - "the date when the various manipulative techniques for dealing with human problems encountered one another".

When Christopher Nolan writes in his autobiography (*Don't Burst My Dream*, 1980, Widdowson and Nicholson, £3.99, 0 287 77978 8) of "brilliant, bright, boiling words poured into his mind" he is describing the sense of elation which accompanied his discovery of a means of expression. Years of pent-up feelings had suddenly found an outlet - a very productive one. For it became clear, with the first lines he typed laboriously on his typewriter, that Christopher Nolan had been nurturing a rare literary talent.

He was eleven at the time, severely handicapped, immobilized and speechless. A new drug on the market, which gave him some control over his "feeling, jerky spasms", a "volcanic" attack attached to his forehead, and the help of his mother, enabled him at last to get to grips with the previously unsolvable problem of communication. Now, four years later, he uses a micro-computer, and his output to date consists of stories, poems, plays and the short third-person autobiography

As a history of the struggle between the psychiatric establishment and the generous intentions which have inspired a series of Alternatives to Psychiatry, this book is flawed by its apparent conviction that such laudable enterprises have been deliberately thwarted by evil forces - and that (again, about 1909) "a capitalist notion of rationality came to dominate all areas of life".

There are interesting accounts of fluctuating fashions in psychiatric care, but these lose credibility because of the authors' dogmatic ideological judgments. Even when the supposed arch-enemies of humane care - doctors on the staff of the National Institute of Mental Health, and members of the American Psychiatric Association - have publicly admitted grave errors in some officially approved treatment programmes - these admissions are dismissed as being merely a tactic for re-asserting their "benign" control.

Not everything in the book is condemnatory. The story of the short-lived, ill-fated free clinics in San Francisco and Boston is more sympathetically told (perhaps by Anne Lovell). The struggles of patients' groups are also well described, as are the occasions on which the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for Mental Health have come to their aid. The progress of the Gay and Feminist movements towards greater social acceptance of their members' rights is also belligerently supported; but the book ends (where it has ever for long left off) with extravagant assertions, such as that there is little real difference between psychiatrists and the KGB, and that to all the groups and agencies who make their living in the practice of "pay to the power" the most highly diversified and tightly knit network of social control that exists anywhere in the world."

In a lengthy peroration the authors blame psychoanalysis and the mental health movement for having presumed to know what constitutes mental health, and to guide mentally healthy people to become even healthier; but they also go much further than this, blaming every individual and every institution in a free enterprise, capitalist society for being, either deliberately or passively, agents for the perpetuation of that society. Ultimately, therefore, every organized endeavour to help the mentally disturbed is condemned, just as are all individual therapists, however benevolent their intentions. Their training is dismissed as being merely "skills" at manipulating people to accept the constraints of society. Their conclusion: "One must know that nobody is exempt from the growing importance of social controls before one can prepare to work against them by mopping up and hopefully adding to the last remaining territory not yet fallen, under the sway of the old guardians of law and order and the new engineers of the mind."

Clearly, this is not merely a condemnation of all existing services for mental health care, but something much more ambitious: it is a manifesto for a society free of all social controls.

poignantly and accurately entitled "A Mummy Encomium". Christopher Nolan's work is characterized by flamboyance, alliteration, and a wild originality of approach. His descriptive phrases are striking and sometimes felicitous: "zany, bone-deep December", "the dolorous days of death". He can rise to irony, as when he describes himself in these terms: "a frightening headlamp, a foolish facial expression and a doubtful public". He displays a sure feeling for the vivid and the dramatic: "id storms his sad-looking Mam and his damned-angry Dad" - his stage direction refers to an interesting moment in one of his plays, "where a couple of outraged parents are about to confront their delinquent son ('Look smart car and feverishly give an honest account of your activities at school yesterday', it goes on). The poems at present have something of a hit-or-miss quality about them, but there are indications that this will be rectified when greater discipline succeeds the heady excess of creativity.

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## Thinking polaristically

David Trotter

JOHN BURT FOSTER

Heirs to Dionysus: A Nietzschean Current in Literary Modernism  
474pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £19.30.  
0 691 06480 6

It is not immediately apparent whether the Nietzschean "current" envisaged by Heirs to Dionysus is electric or fluvial. This current has an "energizing" and even "vivifying" effect. People receive "shocks of recognition". Its guardian deity, Dionysus, proves an "electrifying figure". Yet it also produces "swirls and eddies". And no sooner have we got that one straight than the philosopher's influence starts to behave like "an unstable atom throwing off fragments in all directions". The cover-picture (a nude of hobs and squirts) shows a "limb-induced bubble chamber event" and is "intended to illustrate the nature of Nietzsche's impact on the modernists".

No such excitability disturbs the sober tone of the book, or its sobering length, or its monumental regard for the protocol as well as the substance of scholarship. Indeed, the argument unfolds with so impetuous and ponderous a lucidity that one sometimes wonders whether the pages on which Foster says what he's going to do, or what a critic ought to do, or what the reader should take care not to do, will outweigh the pages on which anything is actually done. In this respect, it seems a tribute less to *gay science* than to the exaggeratedly prudent pleasures of Nietzsche's mentor, the philologist Ritschl, who used to leave banknotes between the pages of books so that he would be pleasantly surprised when he came to reread them. Students borrowing one of the books would assume that Ritschl was offering them a discreet loan.

A more ruthless editor might perhaps have dismantled some of these rhetorical bulwarks and gargoyles, and allowed us a clearer sight of what is in fact a creditable contribution to an important and fascinating subject. Setting out to redefine Nietzsche's influence on modernism, and thus modernism itself, Foster cannot across a "narrower and less diffuse phenomenon", an "identifiable group" of writers (Gide, Mann, Lawrence, Malraux) who had responded directly to identifiable Nietzschean themes. His book offers an extended analysis of work by these four men. Its "resolute explicitness" will, he hopes, provoke us into further thought about the nature of Nietzsche's influence and about the nature of modernist fiction.

Foster makes two main points about that influence. First, he argues against Brian Heller's view of Nietzsche as a "quintessence of the age, the philosopher who provided an intellectual framework within which literary and cultural development, between Nietzsche and his heirs, there is not only a relation of ideas to ideas, but also a relation of ideas to ideas, of images to images, and of images to ideas. Secondly, he suggests that writers often "begin by feeling an intense identification with Nietzsche but later discover that it threatens their sense of artistic integrity and originality". The model becomes a rival.

Foster's exposition of the ideas and images his chosen writers were imitating or reworking is painstaking and helpful. The heirs to Dionysus were heirs above all to that fondness for dualism or "polaristic thinking" (as Foster puts it) exemplified not only by the opposition between Apollo and Dionysus in the early *Birth of Tragedy*, but also by such later pairings as master and slave or sickness and health. These are non-dialectical dualisms, in which each term is affirmative and exists in its own right rather than as a negation of the other. Nietzsche, of course, continued throughout his career to extend and modify his image of Dionysus. Foster is therefore able to discuss a wide range of issues without losing sight of Dionysus. Issues such as the psychology of creativity and inadequacy, critical crises and the will to power, *The Birth of Tragedy* may have held a particular fascination for

modernist writers, but like us they were looking back down the entire career of a philosopher who concluded his autobiography with the motto "Dionysus versus the Crucified". Foster's account of that career is selective, the principle of selection being when his chosen novelists made out of the philosopher, or rather what he believes them to have made out of the philosopher. It doesn't include the man obsessed by the relativity of interpretation and by the precarious relation between language and meaning. It doesn't include the man who spoke in an early letter of his passion for writing:

Above all, a few gay spirits in my own style must once more be unleashed; I must learn to play on them as on a keyboard, but not only pieces I have learnt by heart - no - but also free fantasias, as free as possible, yet still always logical and beautiful.

"Do I still live in it?" he wrote twenty years later in *Twilight of the Idols*, "that one has to be able to dance with the *pey* - but at this point I should become a complete enigma to German readers. . . . And not only German readers."

But it is the exponent of immorality and nihilistic thinking whose presence in modernist fiction Foster seeks to establish. The very plots of *The Idylls* and *Death in Venice* were shaped, he argues, by Nietzschean polemics. Both Michel and Aschenbach "turn away from worlds distorted by abstraction and theory only to discover that the Dionysus Nietzsche had invoked as his guide to a better, 'tragic' culture is in reality a 'savage god'". Their development reverses the pattern of Greek culture, which had moved from an influx of the Dionysian through a tragic age to the triumph of theory. Ode and Mann thus accept Nietzsche's challenge to "imagine 'the gradual awakening of the Dionysian spirit in our modern world', but for them that spirit is compulsive and allistic.

This is a good chapter, alert to detail and to Mann's relatively more subtle handling of Nietzschean themes. At the time of *The Idylls*, Gide was a little too close to Nietzsche for comfort; he spoke of a "charming fatality" which had led him to visit places the philosopher had passed through; and to spend a winter in Siles-Maris. (In the novel itself, curiously enough, it is the Nietzschean Ménélik who follows in Michel's footsteps to Biskra.) Mann's response was more complex and more assured, as Foster shows. There is further evidence for his argument in the way the painted faces of Zarathustra's "men of the present" are "written over with the signs of the past and these signs are written with new signs" - re-appropriated metaphorically in Michel's desire to peel off the mass of acquired knowledge which covers his mind "like a mask of pain"; but enter Mann's characterization: the old man in the boat to Venice; Aschenbach's visit to the "artist in cosmology".

Foster begins his chapter on *Women in Love* by remarking on "the engagement with Nietzsche evident in its systematic use of imagery". His comments on the imagery so often perceptive, but acknowledge that the engagement of image with source is sometimes less than wholehearted.

He has most success in relating the speculations of Birkin in *Moon* to Zarathustra's standstill (although I would have welcomed some reference to Birkin's experiences on the cross-Channel ferry, where he feels that the world has been torn in two and that he is "plunging like an unlit star through the ineffable rift"). Even so, it is hard not to echo Ursula's riposte to Birkin: "I don't trust you when you drag in the stars."

Foster argues that the themes of cultural crisis and life-affirmation in the novel have "a substantial Nietzschean component". "Gide's story dramatizes the issue of crisis in its two phases of decadence and nihilism, and Birkin's story examines the borderline situation that looks towards 'renewal'." It would have been hard for someone of Lawrence's generation

to write about decadence and nihilism without drawing on Nietzsche. Lawrence certainly did, although for him Nietzsche was perhaps as much a symptom as a symptomatology. Gide and Loeke acknowledge the crisis of art and society, but to counter it they possess only "mocking imaginations of destruction", nihilistic fantasies about a man who "invented such a perfect explosive that it blew the earth in two". One recalls Nietzsche's claim that *Ecce Homo* "blasts, literally, the history of mankind in two - the highest superlative of dynamite. . . ."

The comparisons Foster offers between the rules of Birkin and Zarathustra seem more plausible in outline than in detail. Even so, an extensive familiarity with Nietzsche's work has helped him to write well, on the whole, about Lawrence. Whether the same could be said of his chapter on Malraux, I don't feel competent to judge. There the argument turns on the sociocultural implications of Nietzschean polemics on the psychology of inadequacy, and on the philosopher's madness.

The last novel considered is *Doctor Faustus*, "product of an imagination that was saturated with Nietzsche and his writings", and surely one of the most absorbing tributes literature has ever paid to philosophy. Mann freely acknowledged that his hero, Adrian Leverkühn, was modelled on part on Nietzsche; so the question here is not the degree of influence, but its kind and its reasons. Foster illuminates the connection between Leverkühn and the character sketches of "theoretical man" in *The Birth of Tragedy* and elsewhere. He also stresses the way Mann plays off narrow and limiting versions of Nietzsche's political thought developed in Germany after the philosopher's death against its broader possibilities.

Here too Foster proves a competent critic. Overall, there can be no doubt that his European perspective has brought into the argument emphases and connections which might otherwise have remained hidden. But has he also succeeded in identifying a particular "current" among twentieth-century novelists, and thus altered our understanding of modernism?

In his concluding chapter, Foster offers this current as an alternative within modernism to the tradition he believes to have been defined by Harry Levin's 1946 book on Joyce, a tradition committed to "innovative choices in artistic method and subject matter". Foster's modernists were less concerned with formal innovation than with the development of a "world-view", an effort which involved assimilating and revising Nietzschean themes. They looked, he claims, to the advocate of aesthetic naturalism rather than to the man who unchained free fantasies, the man who insisted on the oblique relation of language to meaning. I believe, on the contrary, that Mann at least was less immune to free fantasies and scepticism about the status of language than Foster allows. Mann read Levin's book on Joyce while he was working on *Doctor Faustus* and he commented on the striking appropriateness to his own work of its definitions of modernism.

Foster argues that in terms of form and style *Doctor Faustus* owes virtually nothing to Nietzsche. But it seems to me that Nietzsche's acute sense of the shifting and oblique nature of language did provoke Mann to thought. Consider, for example, the letter in which Leverkühn describes to what Zeitblom notices about the letter is the way it switches from a lucid modern style into a parody of Old German when the adventure is recounted, and then back again at the end. Leverkühn has to guard himself against his perception of the event by slipping into archaic diction. Was Mann remembering the letter Nietzsche wrote to Franz Overbeck on September 18, 1887? This letter begins in German with commonplace remarks and then suddenly diverges into Latin as Nietzsche reveals to Overbeck the urgency of his despair, and his longing for death. He too had to find a language which would protect him

from Zeitblom, Mann's narrator, finds it difficult to convey the sinister and tumultuous meaning of Leverkühn's life. His words seem to arrive too early or too late; either they precede meaning, or they straggle after. Sometimes he gets ahead of his story, referring to characters who have not yet appeared; these "too empty, too early names" must wait entire chapters before they are filled with meaning. At the same time, his hand shakes constantly as he writes, limping behind his train of thought. These and other narrative difficulties reproduce Leverkühn's position as an "archaic revolutionary": his knowledge of musical theory is premature, acquired too early in his life; and yet in the history of music he is too late, condemned to parody.

The most striking example of the difficulties of expression, however, is not Zeitblom but Leverkühn's first mentor, Kretzschmar. Kretzschmar is afflicted by a stutter of a particularly developed kind: "tragic, because he was a man gifted with great and urgent riches of thought, passionately addicted to giving out information. He is a brilliant lecturer, but his speech often jams completely when he is over some potent insight, such as the relation between death and artistic objectivity. Language comes behind, too late for the thought in its fullness. It has been suggested that the spelling of his name (usually Anglicized as Kretschmar) alludes to Nietzsche. Nietzsche also had a friend called Kretzschmar, who was a disciple of Schopenhauer and committed suicide in 1867. In any case, stammering is a Nietzschean image for the difficulties of expression. He once remarked that the author of *The Birth of Tragedy* had appeared to be "stammering out laborious, arbitrary phrases in an alien tongue". "And, indeed, this 'new soul' should have sung, not spoken." Zarathustra expects to "hobble and stutter" like a poet.

In his most thorough account of language, "On Truth and Falsehood in an Extra-Moral Sense" (written 1873, published 1903), Nietzsche said that the relation between mind and reality demanded "a sort of halting, stammering translation into an entirely foreign language". He compared language itself to Chladni's figures, geometric patterns produced by scripping the bow of a violin against the edge of a board covered with fine sand. The indirect relation between the pattern produced and the tone of the oole is comparable to the indirect relation between language and meaning.

Mann read Nietzsche's writings of the early 1870s while working on *Doctor Faustus*, so he might have known this essay (Foster considers it irrelevant). Chladni's figures is one of the tricks Mr. Leverkühn uses to keep Adrian and Serenus happy; it is even shown to Kretzschmar. Does Nietzsche's vivid concern with the difficulties of expression enter Mann's novel along with the image? It seems to me a question worth asking, even if the answer is far from clear.

Nor should this kind of question be restricted to Mann. In *Time and Western Man* Wyndham Lewis pointed out that "the dynamical - or what Nietzsche called the *dionysian*, and which he professed - is a relation, something that happens, between two or more opposites, when they meet in their pyrrhic encounters". Levin's early experiments in prose (*The Enemy of the Stars*, *The Wild Body*) had all involved such pyrrhic encounters: "pyrrhic thinking", indeed. But by using Zeitblom's words about the letter is the way it switches from a lucid modern style into a parody of Old German when the adventure is recounted, and then back again at the end. Leverkühn has to guard himself against his perception of the event by slipping into archaic diction. Was Mann remembering the letter Nietzsche wrote to Franz Overbeck on September 18, 1887? This letter begins in German with commonplace remarks and then suddenly diverges into Latin as Nietzsche reveals to Overbeck the urgency of his despair, and his longing for death. He too had to find a language which would protect him

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AFRICA

J. DESMOND CLARK (Editor)  
The Cambridge History of Africa  
Volume 1. From the Earliest Times to c.500 BC  
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At last the long-awaited Volume One of the *Cambridge History of Africa* is out, four years after Volume Two and five years after Volume Three. It follows the familiar format of the Cambridge Histories, in comprising a fat volume containing a dozen monographs, many of them the size of small books in themselves, written by leading scholars in their field. The "about" in the sub-title of "From the Earliest Times to c. 500 ac" is important, as it is an indication of the difficulty of applying precise periodization to a continent whose history ran very differently in different parts of it. At this cut-off date part of the continent had seen three thousand years of the evolution of one of the major "ancient civilizations" of the Old World, while another part continued to see hunting, gathering and fishing ways of life organized in small-scale social units without even the techniques of pottery or metallurgy.

This immediately highlights the formidable difficulties of trying to produce a volume covering the history of the continent up to 500 ac. Because Africa is vast and contains within it such geographical, historical and cultural variety, it is extremely difficult to know how best to divide up a general history of all but its last two-and-a-half millennia: whether by area, by period or by topic. Because no one individual can be expected to encompass the whole at the level of detail aimed at, inevitably there are some unevennesses, some overlaps and some inconsistencies. A particular kind of unevenness arises out of the editor's difficulty in persuading all his contributors to submit their promised chapters by the agreed deadline, a problem familiar to anyone who has tried to edit a cooperative work. Those who fail to meet the deadline by a wide margin cause the wranglings of the earlier contributors to become out-of-date before they are printed. So it is in this volume: some chapters have references up to 1980, others nothing after 1976.

Another difficulty stems from the fact that, while Africa may be a geographical entity on a map of the world, in other respects it is an abstraction. The history of Ancient Egypt cannot be treated in isolation from the rest of the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean; and "Africa" has never been and never will be a single ecological or cultural unit. The "idea of Africa", however, does have a certain reality as an emotional image, as a focus for certain sets of powerful feelings. Since this is so, it is not likely that the writing of African history will escape the effect of such emotions. All perceptions are conditioned by the but of innumerable emotional, cultural, emotional - of the observer. This is the basis both of the history of reality and of the writing of history. Few historians would nowadays pretend to be able to write completely objectively, even if they claim to avoid the worst excesses of the Whig, Marxist or any other "view" of history, or to be justified by their use of a new method of analysis which can bring fresh insights. The writings of history are not (apart from records of things as they happened, they are expressions of the writers' own attitudes to their present, of how they see the world, using the partial and selected evidence of the past. That is why history is re-written in each generation. One sees partly what one wants to see, partly what one has a frame of interpretation to enable one to see. The writing of history is affected both by the emotional attitudes of the writer, often unrecognized, as well as by his more theoretical attitudes about the nature of historical causation.

Because of folk-memories of the slave-trade, because of the more recent colonial experience, but above all because in part of the continent blacks are still treated as less than human and accorded a third-class legal status, "Africa" has become a symbol of black aspirations and a focus for the rebuttal of allegations concerning their supposed inferiority in the human family. Therefore, since black Africa came to independence, there has tended to be among the new generation of African historians an understandable desire to demonstrate "African achievement", and, springing from this, a tendency to create generalizations about the African past, spuriously regarding it as a single unified whole. It is only natural that when realists, for subconscious reasons of self-interest, continue to try to buttress their contention that blacks are innately inferior to whites by pointing to their alleged lack of achievement in the past, today's African historians and those in sympathy with them should be tempted to counter this by playing up past African achievement to the

## From hominids to pharaohs

C. Thurstan Shaw

publication of the particular volume under review makes the claim in its preface to be "the first relatively complete and authoritative overview of African prehistory" technically inaccurate, since the first two Unesco volumes were published in 1981 (and reviewed in the TLS on March 20, 1981).

On the whole the Cambridge volume is incomparably better than the Unesco. It is more scholarly, it is more up-to-date, and it has been better edited. Generalizations about works of multiple authorship are always difficult, but it would not be unfair to say that in our imagined scale of attitude and standpoint running from extreme Eurocentrism to the ardent demonstration of African achievement, many of the authors in the Unesco volumes must rank high towards the latter end of that scale, sometimes to the detriment of more objective judgment. The Cambridge volume would be placed pretty much in the middle of the scale. Most of the prehistorians contributing feel

Ancient Egypt but only eight others for the prehistory of the rest of the continent. This means that in a number of cases they are expected to give an account for the whole continent, or a major part of it, of a particular period or topic; the amount of data and research results available are such that in some cases, this is making excessive demands, and the narrower specialists will inevitably make errors and omissions in their particular sphere. Overlap between authors is defended in the preface, and there seems to have been no editorial policy to try to reconcile inconsistencies, which is reasonable, but it would have been helpful if an editorial footnote could have cross-referenced these.

In such detailed reporting of archaeological evidence, there has to be a great deal of matter concerned with artifacts of one sort or another. For this, archaeologists have to use the terminology of their discipline, which they have developed to define their entities more precisely and in

From J. E. Alexander's *An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa (1838)* which is included in the exhibition "Scotland and Africa" at The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh until September 30.

limit of credibility - and sometimes beyond.

This was only to be expected, as a reaction to the Eurocentric writing of African history which was common up to twenty years ago and which has still not disappeared. The most quoted example of this came from the pen of a Regent Professor of History at Oxford, who wrote: "Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none; there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness. . . and darkness is not a subject of history." Hugh Trevor-Roper went on to give a warning against the uselessness of bothering with "the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe". However, it was an African historian who defended the but of innumerable emotional, cultural, emotional - of the observer. This is the basis both of the history of reality and of the writing of history. Few historians would nowadays pretend to be able to write completely objectively, even if they claim to avoid the worst excesses of the Whig, Marxist or any other "view" of history, or to be justified by their use of a new method of analysis which can bring fresh insights. The writings of history are not (apart from records of things as they happened, they are expressions of the writers' own attitudes to their present, of how they see the world, using the partial and selected evidence of the past. That is why history is re-written in each generation. One sees partly what one wants to see, partly what one has a frame of interpretation to enable one to see. The writing of history is affected both by the emotional attitudes of the writer, often unrecognized, as well as by his more theoretical attitudes about the nature of historical causation.

We now have before us two cooperative attempts to produce a detailed general history of Africa, superseding the heroic efforts of those authors who have attempted to do it the other way round. The first is the single-handed. The first is the *Cambridge History of Africa* and the second the Unesco *General History of Africa*, and it is impossible not to compare them. Although the Cambridge volumes began appearing before the Unesco ones, the delay in

sympathetic towards modern African aspirations and in one or two cases this comes through in the interpretation of evidence, aiming to give the greatest credit to indigenous developments.

On the whole, however, the approach is positivist and empirical, in fact almost conservative. There are no Kuchian revolutions; but the most widely accepted paradigms of contemporary African archaeology are clothed with a wealth of detail unmatched by any other single publication. There is no discussion of methods, such as that to be found in the first Unesco volume. Neither volume includes any discussion of the theoretical ideas underlying the interpretations of culture change, a matter of great concern to the modern generation of archaeologists. The ideas that inform the interpretations of the individual contributors emerge implicitly rather than explicitly. In tune with current archaeological fashion, ecological construction and internal innovation are generally preferred to the diffusion and migration which have for so long been the stock explanations for evidences of cultural change. If modern Africa's poverty vis-à-vis the Western world and the reasons for it are the most important "topic" for African historians, theories offering to account for cultural change or the lack of it must be of paramount importance. Otherwise the old, simplistic notion of innate inferiority to account for alleged African "stagnation" and "irrelevance" will be peddled by the prejudiced default of more complex, more valid explanations. However, there is no discussion of theories of culture change in the present volume except in a passing.

Another difference from the Unesco volumes is that the latter draw upon a far larger number of specialists, which has its own drawbacks, whereas the volume under review uses three specialists for

sink-holes in an otherwise rather dry, treeless environment. Butzer comments on the fact that Plio-Pleistocene deposits with significant numbers of fossils are not known in the areas of broadleaf tropical forest, or even in the heavily wooded areas adjoining them. He might have added that the drainage pattern of Africa may also help to account for this distribution: a map plotting the inland drainage basins of the continent shows a large correspondence with the areas of evidence for early man.

One may remark in passing that if one takes a broad look at African prehistory, one can see a shift of importance from one area of the continent to another. During the Pliocene and Lower Pleistocene, development is confined in an area east of 25°E latitude; during the Middle and Upper Pleistocene northern Africa also comes into the picture; during the Holocene the focus of importance moves progressively into what is now the Sahara, the savannas to the south of it, the Lower Nile valley and the West African forest. What may be the reasons for these trends are worthy of attention.

The chapter by Clark Howell on the origins and evolution of the African hominids is a most valuable, up-to-date summary of our knowledge of the topic, and is far more detailed and definitive than the corresponding section in the Unesco volume. Naturally Howell's interpretations of the data do not always agree with those of other workers in the same field. He offers a useful discussion of the definition of *Homo*, although he seems to leave out of account Tobias's helpful concept of "mosaic evolution" (in which the prehuman ancestor did not suddenly cross a Rubicon to become man; rather, different human characteristics were acquired at different points in the evolution of the species). Howell comes down firmly against the "competitive exclusion principle" to assert that there was coexistence temporarily, and even spatially, of at least two hominid taxa through a substantial span of Pliocene and Quaternary time, and he gives detailed evidence for this. At the end of his chapter he considers the origins of the African negro people and concludes that these still remain largely unknown - an ignorance usually attributed to the rarity of archaeological and human skeletal documentation from the forested and wooded areas of the equatorial reaches of the continent.

Glyn Isaac's chapter on the earliest archaeological traces gives a most valuable and detailed summary of the artifactual evidence, together with the patterns revealed, with a welcome emphasis that these are only the means to the end of reconstructing early behaviour - in which hunting, food-sharing, division of labour, a home base and tool-making can be viewed as a set of behaviours which have been fundamental to human differentiation. Dart's "osteodontokeratic culture" is regarded as dubious and unproven (compared with Balout's acceptance of it, and of the "type-fossil" model, in the Unesco volume). Isaac is inclined to see the "Developed Oldowan" as an "activity variant" of the Acheulian; in fact it has been called the Acheulian Type B by Klein and others. We do not understand the ending of the Acheulian, but there is no evidence for any catastrophic causation. Fire is recognized in the cold temperate zone from 500,000 ac but only from 200,000 ac in Africa; however, under tropical conditions of weathering, traces of fire are not likely to survive longer, so Africa may have had the use of fire before the "break-out" from Africa. To account for the differences between tool assemblages, Isaac considers the relative merits of the three models (not necessarily mutually exclusive) of parallel phylogenetic activity faces and random drift.

There is a comparable discussion in the succeeding chapter by Clark Howell on the cultures of the Middle Palaeolithic/Middle Stone Age, whether differences between industrial assemblages are due to

the palaeoecology of the African continent. We do not understand the ending of the Acheulian, but there is no evidence for any catastrophic causation. Fire is recognized in the cold temperate zone from 500,000 ac but only from 200,000 ac in Africa; however, under tropical conditions of weathering, traces of fire are not likely to survive longer, so Africa may have had the use of fire before the "break-out" from Africa. To account for the differences between tool assemblages, Isaac considers the relative merits of the three models (not necessarily mutually exclusive) of parallel phylogenetic activity faces and random drift.

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temporal patterning, discrete populations, or different activities. A detailed account of the period is given, region by region, and it is possible to see the differentiation of an increasing number of strategies for subsistence in an increasing number of different ecological situations. It is the period when modern man comes upon the scene: we have evidence for the intentional burial of the dead and a number of innovations are made. One of these, the blunting of the back edge of a sharp blade (penknife fashion), appears as early in Africa as in Europe and was the foundation for making composite tools and the earliest forms of arrowhead.

The next two chapters are the first to divide the continent so that each considers less than the whole: the first by Philip Smith on the Late Palaeolithic of Northern Africa, and the second by David Phillipson on the Later Stone Age in sub-Saharan Africa. Both give a detailed account of the archaeological evidence, but the second author has the more difficult task in covering such a wide area with so much data. After 20,000 years there is more regional diversity all over the continent, perhaps connected with higher population densities and more differentiated patterns of ecological adaptation. Behavioural differences between sub-regions are difficult to explain (eg. ritual practices in connection with the dead and the living) and art for personal adornment, common in the Maghrib but rare in the Lower Nile valley; these differences are likely to have been due to different belief systems and methods of symbolic expression. The differences at this time north and south of the Mediterranean indicate that the inland sea was still much of a barrier. That North Africa was a "backward, refuge area" no longer fits the facts and is not an adequate explanation.

We cannot yet identify for certain those elements in North Africa which were of external rather than of indigenous origin; outside influences are most likely to have come from the Upper Palaeolithic III-VI of Palestine, but we cannot be certain. "One might with nearly as much persuasion argue that at times movements of people and techniques were in the opposite direction." We are not yet sure whether the diversity of lithic assemblages in Nubia and Upper Egypt between about 16,000 and 10,000 BC, reflects different economic postures, distinct groups of people or intrusions of new concepts. It is believed that the large cemeteries associated with the Qadan industry (c.12,000-9000 BC) reflect the existence of larger communities and closer identification with a particular territory than before; while the presence on some of the skeletons of evidence of violent death might indicate conflict and competition under conditions of population stress.

The chapter on sub-Saharan Africa is perhaps less successful, especially the part on West Africa, which is not so up-to-date as the rest. The author confirms the desirability of getting rid of the spurious entity "the Magosian" (although curiously he does not refer to Crütsch's 1967 paper on the subject), and of not giving "the Wilton" wider application outside Cap Province. He sticks to his belief that the development of microliths was associated with the growth of denser vegetation cover, whereas others have given over to the opposite interpretation. The survey of lithic industries shows their gradual evolution from their local predecessors, in most cases as autochthonous developments without external stimulus. "Microlithic technology was locally developed in central Africa at a date significantly earlier than that of the introduction of its counterparts in Europe." In the human population, three groups are said to be represented: "negroids", Khoisan and "related to caucasoids". One may comment that it is preferable not to use a linguistic term like Khoisan to indicate a gene-pool, and that those said to be "related to caucasoid stocks" may be Harnatians "autochthonous negroids"; but the author is well aware of the complexity of this topic. Somewhat cursory treatment is given to the rock art which was so abundantly produced in this period. The oldest is over 25,000 years old, some examples date to the sixth and the fourth millennia AD, but the majority are to be assigned to the last few millennia. There is no evidence

for any connection between the rock art of the Sahara and that from south of the Equator. Non-decussive theories for the art are rather cavalierly dismissed and there is no mention of the work of Vinnicombe, which broke new ground.

There are three chapters on Egypt: by Bruce Trigger on the rise of civilization there; by Barry Kemp on the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Periods; and by David O'Connor on the period 1552-664 BC. In the book these chapters are separated by others, but here it will be convenient to refer to them together. Not being an Egyptologist the present reviewer is not really in a position to offer any criticism, but they appear to be first-class and to supersede those in the *Cambridge Ancient History*. What is excellent is that in every case considerable space and attention is paid to the relationship between Ancient Egypt and the lands beyond her borders in Africa; one guesses that this was an editorial direction. Much nonsense has been written about Ancient Egypt and negro Africa - in both directions; first, stemming from the heyday of super-diffusionism, an eagerness to see the hand of Egypt all over the continent in the supposed similarities of isolated culture-trait; and then the reaction against this, claiming that Ancient Egyptian civilization "was really black Africa" (as in the UNESCO volume). It is very valuable, therefore, to have these careful, sober and scholarly assessments of relations between Ancient Egypt and the rest of Africa.

Under "the rise of civilization in Egypt", it is perhaps a pity that in dealing with the important cluster of developments traditionally called "civilization", it is assumed that it is known what these are and that they constitute a single package. However, the chapter offers a valuable and comprehensive review of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods. Reconstructions based on later recorded myths are abjured, and Trigger hesitates to account for cultural change. He firmly declares that there is no trace of a non-Afroasiatic "African substratum" in the Ancient Egyptian language, and the evidence from physical anthropology furnishes no verification for the supposition that the early Predynastic population was negroid. Because many early sites may have been washed away or now lie buried under metres of silt, the known distributions of Predynastic cultures may be determined more by geological than by cultural factors. The almost total lack of stratified deposits in Egypt at a disadvantage compared with their counterparts in south-west Asia. These difficulties still leave us very much in the dark about the things we should like to know concerning the economic, demographic and social circumstances of the emergence of the development called "civilization". Account is taken of the idea that the centralization of authority arose in the situation of population pressure and warfare where the amount of agricultural land was constrained by the surrounding deserts, but the management of trade and of cult-centres is seen as more formative in leading to stratification of society and the increasing concentration of political authority. Archaeology still sheds little light on the political history of Egypt in prehistoric times. Trigger supports Frankfort's view that "the union of the two kingdoms" was more the creation of politico-theological dogma than of historical reality, and that a united kingdom of Lower Egypt probably never existed. Nor do we know as much as we should like about prehistoric methods of land tenure, or how the concept of the "divine king" arose; there is a fair-minded discussion whether this arose in Egypt or spread to the Nile valley from the south or whether it arose from a common origin and in similar predisposing circumstances.

The nature of this kingship is discussed in some detail in Kemp's chapter, which takes us to the end of the Second Intermediate Period, in the context of Egyptian ways of thinking and with the king seen as the upholder of an ordered society. Pyramids are to be regarded, first, and foremost, as temples for the royal statues, with a royal tomb attached to each, which, acting as a huge reliquary, gave enormous authority to what was, in

essence, an ancestor cult and an important factor in the stability of government. More data is given on the Hyksos to show that they were not the "shepherd-kings" of Manetho, but Asiatics establishing themselves in the eastern delta out of the chaotic conditions the Middle Kingdom fell into, there having been numbers of Asiatics living and working in Egypt for some time. There is no discussion of the identity of the Hebrews and the lack of Egyptian evidence to confirm the Old Testament story of their sojourn in Egypt.

Both this and the last chapter on Egypt, taking us down to 664 BC, have something to say about the kingdom of Kush. Under the New Kingdom in Nubia "one may legitimately speculate that the distinctions between resident Egyptians and numerically dominant Nubians became increasingly blurred, with Nubians beginning to move into the upper levels of government and society. Unfortunately the acculturation process in Wawat makes it impossible to confirm this hypothesis, while data for Kush are as yet inadequate." The evolution of the Kushite state throughout the Third Intermediate Period is undocumented, except for the tombs of the apparent predecessor of the 25th Dynasty at Kurru, near Napata (going back to 860 BC). This is another important and tantalizing question about which we are ignorant because of lack of evidence; perhaps archaeologists should go out and look for it. In Volume Two of the *Cambridge History of Africa* Shinnie also has to dismiss this question by saying "Evidence for the first Kushite rulers and for the culture of their people is scanty."

A great deal of attention is paid to identifying the land of Punt. The authors of both the last two chapters on Egypt place it in the general area of northern Eritrea rather than further south along the Red Sea Coast or even beyond the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. An established emporium on the Eritrean coast could have drawn on the incense trees native to southern Arabia. For incense and gold were the principal commodities the Egyptians desired from the lands to the south-east of their domain. They did not have imperial ambitions like the Assyrians, Persians or Hittites; once their territorial integrity was assured and trade routes to needed materials protected, they were satisfied. There is little evidence for widespread Egyptian influence throughout the continent, from western to southern Africa, as has been claimed by some. Even where some claims are eventually proven, as now they are, not any cultural diffusion is likely to have been through the mediation of partly Egyptianized Kushites and Libyans rather than direct contact.

Outside Egypt, three chapters are concerned with the same economic development which made the Egyptian developments possible - the change from food-collecting to food-producing; a chapter by Gabriel Camps on the beginning of pastoralism and the cultivation in north-west Africa and the Sahara, one by Jack Harlan on the origin of indigenous African agriculture, and one by David Phillipson on early food production in sub-Saharan Africa. The first of these chapters is in some ways the least satisfactory. In the references that go up to 1978, it is that. There are no references to Andrew Smith's excavations at Kärkrich in the 1970s, nor to the "aquillite" nor to Clark and Roubert's excavations at the Grotte Capelle. The chapter is a very useful source of information on the evidence, but on the interpretation of the evidence the author's advocacy of an early date (7th millennium BC) for an independent "early" cereal well ultimately be proven right, on either slender or open to alternative explanation (pollen grains of a certain size), or Indreot, in the form of pottery, vessels and grinding equipment. Camps says that "the existence of pottery... but

then must be archaeologists today would regard belief in a necessary and invariable connection between the two as old-fashioned. He also falls into the trap of first putting forward a tentative interpretation and then using this as if it were a fact to further the argument. It is clear now that there were cattle pastoralists widely spread over the Sahara, then moister, from 6000 BC onwards, but whether they also had domesticated cereals at such an early date must for the time being remain an open question. It is also an open question whether they had domesticated the local wild cattle of North Africa or had received them from outside - perhaps via Tunisia rather than Egypt. (In the French literature of the subject, these cattle pastoralists are known as "Les bovidiens", and "bovidien" is used adjectivally as a cultural term and to refer to the period of their dominance. Need this be translated into English as "Bovidian"? Among other things, it means in some odd phrases, such as "Bovidian lithic industries".)

The latter part of this chapter has a useful account of the coming of metal technology to North Africa, and of the origin of the Berbers. There is some welcome scepticism about seeing "chariot-routes" in the distribution of rock-paintings and engravings of chariots. The "routes" are dismissed as wishful thinking; the chariots were too light for transporting anything useful, and they are sometimes portrayed in places where it would have been impossible for chariots to go. They are interpreted as status symbols pertaining to chiefs or noblemen. There are a number of statements in this chapter not consistent with those made in other chapters, which have not called for editorial comment, often Camps's views are to be preferred. For example, what he says about the extent of the "Neolithic of Capsian Tradition" correct what is said earlier in Phillipson's chapter.

The chapter by Harlan on the origins of indigenous African agriculture is the shortest and most readable in the book - perhaps because it is written by a non-archaeologist. Conscientiously cautious, archaeologists are at a tremendous disadvantage in their writing because their interpretations have to be so carefully hedged about with "perhaps". Harlan's chapter forms a refreshing contrast. He lists the savanna complex (of which five are cereals), twenty for the forest-margin complex (including oil-palm and four species of yam), and seven for the Ethiopian complex (including two cereals). All these African domesticates make nonsense of the question posed not so long ago by writers on Africa: "What did the population live on before the introduction of American and Asiatic food crops?" The existence of these African agricultural techniques are fundamental to an understanding of the processes of centralization, urbanization and state-formation, which are the subjects of later volumes in the *Cambridge History*. Harlan concedes the possibility that the ground grain of the Sahara between the sixth and the third millennium BC was wheat and barley, although not arriving from south-west Asia via the Nile valley (he was writing, presumably, before Wendorf's discovery of ancient barley there). Others believe that the seeds ground in these early dates were the grains of wild grasses which became ancestral of the shabellon cereals which were in fact domesticated, especially pearl millet and sorghum. For this process Harlan follows Clark in saying "the time-range 3000-1000 BC might have been critical as the Saharan pastoralists moved southwards compelled by desiccation and necessarily were in order, not themselves but by those with whom they came into contact." Clark has offered a model for this process arising as a result of the pressure of the indigenous hunter-gatherers - but the quite how it works is not clear: the hunter-gatherer-fisher, having already adopted a semi-sedentary way of life around the Saharan lakes but having to concentrate and adapt their food-supplies when increasing aridity caused these to dwindle. However, Harlan himself gives a healthy

warning not to be too enamoured of any one particular model, because there is no single one which works universally for all the known incursions of agriculture. Another area of independent agricultural innovation in Africa may have been Ethiopia.

The last part of this chapter oversteps the 500 BC boundary-line to pursue the topic through to the inclusion of the crops introduced by Europeans, and also overlaps with Phillipson's chapter on sub-Saharan Africa. This in turn repeats a lot of the information given in his earlier chapter on the Later Stone Age since at the beginning the intention is announced of dealing with domesticated animals in Africa (Harlan having dealt with the crops) one is surprised to find the amount of space devoted to pottery and stone tools. As with Chapter Six, the treatment of West Africa is weaker than the rest; for example, no account is taken of suggestions published since 1976 for economic and useful relationships between different Late Stone Age tool-kits and different geographical environments; the statement "the only African cattle naturally immune to trypanosomiasis are the humpless short-horns of the West African coastal regions" disregards the more resistant Ndama of the Fouta Djallon. The attitude is diffusionist, and the possibility of indigenous yam and oil-palm domestication unmentioned from "the north" is not entertained.

In summary, one can say that this volume is as good and as up-to-date a description of the present state of knowledge on this vast topic as one is likely to get; in addition it provides authoritative interpretation in the best of the best. It offers an invaluable mine of data for the specialist student and the scholar, rather than a broad canvas, discussing major issues, painted for the benefit of the general reader. The trees are so many and are so conscientiously described that it will require a lot of hard work for many readers before they can get a view of the wood.

One would like to see published a smaller volume, using the data so painstakingly gathered together in the present one, first identifying and then treating some of the major themes in early African history. Ochieng's identification of African poverty and "backwardness" has already been referred to. Others are of two kinds: before the break-out of hominids from Africa, and afterwards. The first sort are themes in the history of mankind, such as the relationships between environment and behaviour in human evolution, between behaviour and changes in anatomy and physiology (eg. loss of oestrus), and the development of speech and language. The second would be more peculiarly African, with an intermediate position for a theme such as the relationship between environment and the development of culture by *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens*. Agriculture is the one topic that has been given thematic treatment, but other "African" themes could be concerned with demography (however difficult it is at the moment to obtain reliable data; 2,000,000 is suggested as the population of Egypt in Early Dynastic times, surely a high percentage of the total population of the whole continent at the time), the history of the languages of Africa, social organization and stratification, the development of genetic groupings and their interrelationships, metallurgy, religion, settlement patterns, the causes and mechanics of cultural change, exchange systems, centralization and state-formation, and so on. It is not that these questions are ignored in the present volume, but they tend to be touched upon, "on the way", or in relation to a particular piece of evidence, rather than being made central and evidence being gathered to bear upon them.

To say this is not to denigrate the book under review - it is simply to say what kind of a book it is and where its value lies. In any case, its price puts it beyond the pockets of all but the wealthy and it will be predominantly a library reference volume. All concerned with the prehistory of Africa must be grateful to the Cambridge University Press for having produced it, to Desmond Clark for editing, and to every one of the contributors. Printing, reproduction of figures and plates, binding, and index are all good.

## ART HISTORY

# Idealism in the round

Michael Baxandall

JUSTUS BIER

Tilmann Riemenschneider: His Life and Work  
[28pp. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. \$27.50.  
0 8131 1428 4

Riemenschneider, considered as a monograph subject, is the most bulky of the sculptors of the early German Renaissance. His large workshop left more pieces of sculpture than any other, and also a fair number of documents. The typical Riemenschneider problems are above all ones of the reconstruction of ensembles. His work was a great victim of the Barockisierung of the 19th century, and hundreds of figures dispersed from a dozen complexes have to be grouped and reconstituted.

Justus Bier's work on Riemenschneider has been a scholarly marathon. In the early 1920s he wrote a doctoral dissertation on early Riemenschneider under the supervision of Heinrich Wölfflin. This was a basis for the first book, *Tilmann Riemenschneider: Die frühen Werke* of 1925. The next instalment came, from a different publisher but in the same format, in 1930 and covered middle-period Riemenschneider: *Die reifen Werke*. A serial monograph, more systematic than anything on the subject before, was under way.

But in the 1930s Bier moved to America, first to teach and later to be a distinguished museum director; from the 1940s he was publishing articles on Riemenschneider again but the concluding volumes of the monograph had to wait. Finally, in the 1970s, they came: *Die späten Werke in Stein* (1973) and *Die späten Werke in Holz* (1978). What is more, they were produced in just the same format as the early volumes. Verlag Schroll of Vienna

# Forms in the light

Charles Hope

JOHN STEER

Alvise Vivarini: His Art and Influence  
[311pp. 152 black-and-white illustrations. Cambridge University Press. £40.00.  
0 521 23363 1

Like Giovanni Bellini, Alvise Vivarini came from a family of Venetian painters. But unlike his more celebrated contemporary he remained essentially a highly skilled craftsman, never quite acquiring the status or attitudes of a creative artist; and, whereas Bellini was often praised by humanists and poets, Alvise does not seem to have been mentioned in a single literary text during his lifetime. Unduly admiring the innovations of more gifted painters such as Antonello da Messina he was usually achieved in his work a superficially modern flavour, but only rarely seems to have made an original contribution. His most distinctive quality as an artist was a preoccupation with quasi-sculptural forms strongly modelled by light. As a result his figures have a plasticity quite unusual in Venetian painting of this period; but this was to have little influence on his successors.

Alvise was not mentioned at all in the first edition of Vasari's *Lives*, although in the second edition, published in 1568, there is a description of two of his pictures; part of the cycle of historical subjects in the Ducal Palace to which Giovanni and Gentile Bellini also contributed, and which was burnt in 1577. Thereafter Alvise remained a shadowy figure, his work usually confused with that of his father Antonio and his uncle Bartolomeo. Various scholars have discussed his paintings, but until now the only monographic treatment of his career is in Pallucchini's study of the entire Vivarini family, which was published in 1962. John Steer has modified Pallucchini's account in various respects, notably in matters of chronology, as well as providing a

deserve great credit for this sensitive achievement: here, in the age of the kaolin-coated wedge, were the same type, the same lay-out, and above all the same weird, shiny, yellowish paper as a small Franco-Algerian publisher had chosen half a century before - and very attractive they are. The integrity of the whole, Bier IV (1925-78), had been maintained.

But the *Tilmann Riemenschneider* under review is not an English version of this big work. It is an adaptation for American readers of a small book Bier produced in 1931 for the fourth century - *Tilmann Riemenschneider: Ein Gedenkbuch*. It consists of an introductory essay on Riemenschneider's life; one hundred and twenty-eight pages of plates; a quite full and discursive catalogue of sixteen items in North American museums; a much more summary catalogue of thirty of the most outstanding items in Germany; and a twelve-page list of all those works Bier accepts as authentic, this being keyed to the page references in the big four-volume Bier.

For the Riemenschneider student the main interest will lie in the section on North American Riemenschneiders, which mostly consists of single figures, but several of high quality. (The United Kingdom could not get a comparable range). For the general reader in Europe, at least, the main value probably lies in the introductory biographical essay. The text of 1931 has been corrected in the light of newer documentary funds but remains faithful to Bier's view of Riemenschneider as the lyric idealist of German sculpture. In the catalogues Bier distinguishes more crisply than is nowadays usual between works entirely from Riemenschneider's own hand, partly from his hand, and not from his hand but from the hands of assistants executing his designs.

It is a pity that the illustrations may not convey very much of Riemenschneider's distinction. For the work in Germany - which means the best work - Bier has usually been loyal to the photographs he has always used. Most of these were specially made between the wars, often under Bier's own supervision, by a Würzburg photographer, and were in conscious reaction against the metricious side-lighting and excessive tonal contrasts that were a curse of much sculpture photography of the time. As photographs of record, and well reproduced as they are in the big Bier, there is still much to be said for their austerity and scruples. But unfortunately reproduced as they are here, they suffer disproportionately and make a good impression.

Still, it is easy to have in English even a small volume on Riemenschneider by Bier, and particularly at this time, when a new cycle is beginning and in a new manner. For in 1978, the year of Bier IV, a working-group was set up, centred on the Berlin Museum, to study the most crucial episode in the early Riemenschneider, the Münster Altar of 1490-92 and its widely dispersed sculptures. This is thought to be the work in which Riemenschneider moves from polychrome to monochrome wood sculpture. A dozen historians, restorers, chemists and archivists contributed specialized skills. The sculptures were brought together, restored and scientifically examined, colloquia were held over them, and an exhibition put on at Würzburg. The group's exhaustive report takes up the greater part of the most recent issue of the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft*, XXXIV, 1980 (1981); it brings a new precision to the old problems and opens up quite new lines of interest too. But, as the authors say, their point of departure had been basically the pages in Bier's first volume, half-a-century old. This would be true of most other Riemenschneider problems one might address. An art historian could not hope for more.

fuller analysis of Alvise's place in the history of Venetian painting.

Alvise Vivarini: His Art and Influence follows a standard pattern, with an introduction outlining Alvise's development, a summary of the documents relating to his career and an extensive and comprehensive catalogue. The plates, without being spectacular, are clear and generally informative, with a good selection of comparative illustrations. Steer's greatest strength is in the stylistic analysis of individual pictures; his conclusions about detailed issues of dating also inspire confidence. He is knowledgeable and informative on the role of assistants. Many of his observations about Alvise's possible influences on younger painters seem justified, on the evidence now available, but the loss of the paintings in the Ducal Palace inevitably makes any assessment of Alvise's later career highly speculative.

Professor Steer's discussion of more specifically historical issues is less satisfactory, particularly in his treatment of Alvise's work in the Ducal Palace. It is not the case that he was employed there on equal terms with the Bellini brothers, nor did he begin work only in 1492. Both Gentile and Giovanni Bellini were promised state sinecures from the outset, whereas Alvise initially agreed to accept a lump sum for each picture he completed. This was in 1488. Four years later the original agreement was modified, so that he received a salary as an advance against his final payment. Steer repeatedly asserts that in 1492 Alvise was requested to work more rapidly, and concludes that as a painter he was slow and relatively unproductive; but I can find no basis for this claim in the document cited in its support. Again, the question of the number of canvases which Alvise was supposed to produce is not adequately examined; the document of 1507 to which Steer refers is more ambiguous than he supposes.

In the case of the Bellini altarpiece, Alvise's largest religious picture, it is likely that more remains to be discovered. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers mention "docu-

ments which refer to its original location, date and price. These are now lost, but it would certainly be worth investigating the ecclesiastical archives of Belluno, as well as the unpublished papers, in the library there, of the local historian, Dogliani. Professor Steer, however, does not seem to have done so. Instead he suggests that Alvise's patron may have been simultaneously Castellani of Belluno and a Procurator in Venice, which is clearly impossible. Another problematical issue is the relationship between Alvise and Jacopo de' Barbari. In his discussion of this subject, although Steer claims to be adopting Pignatti's chronology for Jacopo's prints, he seriously misrepresents it.

These shortcomings do not substantially detract from the value of the book. Alvise may not have been an artist of the first rank, but his work has to be taken into account in any discussion of late fifteenth-century Venetian painting. Professor Steer deserves our gratitude for establishing the basic outline of his career in a way that is unlikely to be superseded. But, considering the exorbitant price of the book, it is deplorable that so many accounts are missing in Italian quotations, and the expressions like "the 1. Frax" and "the 1. Rodenore" have been permitted.

*The Beaux-Arts and Nineteenth-Century French Architecture*, edited by Robin Middleton (280pp. with 202 illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £18. 0 500 34086 2) contains eleven essays on the traditions and influences of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in nineteenth-century France. These include "The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the classical tradition" by Joseph Rykwert, "Planning and building in towns: the system of the Bâtiments Civils in France, 1795-1848" by Georges Teyssot, "Early architectural periodicals" by Helene Lipstadt, "The competition for the Grand Prix in 1824" by Neil Levine and "The building of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts" by C. Marroux as well as essays on Hugo, Labrouste, Hottot and Dutouit.

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Derek Bok

President, Harvard University

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126 Buckingham Palace Road  
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# Adding to the howl of anguish

David Sweetman

NGUGI WA THIONG'O

Devil on the Cross  
254pp. Heinemann. £7.50.  
0 435 90651 8

Waringa, the protagonist of *Devil on the Cross*, has a recurring nightmare: "Instead of Jesus on the Cross, she would see the Devil, with skin as white as that of a very fat European she once saw near the *Rift Valley Sports Club*, being crucified by people in tattered clothes—like the ones she used to see in Bondeni—and after three days, when he was in the throes of death, he would be taken from the Cross by black people in suits and ties, and, thus restored to life, he would mock Waringa."

There is enough in that to show that the while reader is in for a rough ride, not merely from the moral tone of the novel but from the methods used to get its message across—that *Rift Valley Sports Club* detail, pinning down a fantasy with a fact, elsewhere becomes a remorseless attention to the details of time and place. Our heroine does not simply walk around Nairobi, she walks "right along River Road, across Ronald Ngala Street, to find herself standing at the edge of Racecourse Road, between St Peter's Church and the sewing-machine shop, at the Kaka Hotel bus stop." Inevitably, such topographical exactness, overlaid with an abundance of Gikuyu folk wisdom—"that which pecks never pecks for another, the sort of thing that always sounds like a Goon

Show script when put into English—hardly makes this a jolly read. But then the book wasn't written for whitefolks. It was written for Ngugi's own people, in their own language, from which he has made an English translation. The signs are that this is very much a second-best affair over which the author has not wasted much trouble, for where the English isn't over-detailed or folksy it is liable to be just plain flat. Surprisingly then, the book is well worth reading, for what to us are its faults are elsewhere its virtues.

Waringa's dream is a metaphor for the Kenya she knows, a land that has replaced its colonial masters with a rapacious black elite who act as middlemen for the foreign capital that continues to exploit the country's poor. The flamboyant greed of this elite is made more unbesieged by the bitterness of those who have been deluded by the promises of independence. The story of Waringa is the story of that disillusion, told without any attempt at subtlety.

Seduced by a rich old man and abandoned when she is pregnant, Waringa moves to Nairobi. She works as a secretary, trying to pay for the child that her parents are fostering, but is sacked when she refuses to sleep with her boss. She sets off for home in the company of her boyfriend Catuina, and each person encountered on their journey has a tale to tell: the novel digresses in the manner of the oral tradition as each adds his or her life-story to the collective howl of anguish at the morass of theft and misery that is Ngugi's vision of his country. The first third of the novel unfolds in this naturalistic style only to plunge us into

symbolic fantasy, as the lovers find themselves summoned to a gathering of all the great crooks of Kenya in elated the greatest of their number. One claims to be an imported foreign sir, another has made a fortune by running a school in which only foreign subjects and methods are employed and where "Colour is no bar: Money is the bar". Two-thirds in, the novel might have been finished as a work of ironic despair, but Ngugi was not prepared to leave things like that. In the final third, fact and fantasy merge as wish-fulfillment: the peasants rise up and drive away the thieves and Waringa becomes an activist and revolutionary, working as a motor mechanic, learning judo in readiness for the coming struggle.

A rough ride indeed; and this from a man who was chairman of the Literature Department at Nairobi University, a respected novelist in what was settling down to be the ALit tradition. It is obvious that to a foreign reader the background to the book is an essential prerequisite, and although the publishers briefly outline the facts of Ngugi's detention—for writing what was considered a seditious play because it was not written in Kikuyu—and for English but performed by and for peasants in Kikuyu—and explain that this novel was written on lavatory paper during the year the author was imprisoned, all this has only been set out on the dust-jacket, as penitence a commodity as loo-paper, when it should have been the subject of an explanatory note at the front of the book. As should be clear, the novel does not stand on its own, nor, I think, would Ngugi expect it to. It was written for the people it concerns, to highlight

all that they have experienced over the past twenty years and to propose a solution: the road of action, wherever that may lead.

It is a simple, folksy tract, meant for the illiterate or to be read aloud to the illiterate; hence what to us are its idiosyncrasies: the litany of street names adds that essential ring of truth for the farmer who may have attempted to cope with the maze that is the city on his rare visits. The discursive style, the rambling reminiscences are essential features of peasant story-telling everywhere.

This book marks the end of a cosy

relationship between African writers and the metropolitan culture. Rough, uncomfortable, infuriating to us, African writing is going home, and with surprising results. Take the protagonist of this novel: who would have expected that a malvo writer from the Third World would choose to make his central character a woman, and to give his book such a surprising twist at the end—for when Waringa is taken by Catuina to announce their marriage to his parents and she discovers that his father is the very man who initially seduced and abandoned her, she kills him and walks out on the lot of them.

## Heavy sessions

Michael Trend

DAVID STUART RYAN

Looking for Kathmandu  
251pp. Kozmik Press Centre, 48A Astonville Street, London SW18.  
£6.50.  
0 905 11605 4

David Stuart Ryan's *Looking for Kathmandu* is a novel for those who can remember the Pudding Shop in Istanbul—that halfway house for travellers in the 1960s on their way to the enlightened East. Here there was a brick trade in coffee and sticky cakes, hashish and blood. Ryan is a late entrant—perhaps the last—in the genre of Sixties-Journeys-to-the-East novels. Since the closure of Iran and Afghanistan the Journey itself is impossible and, one imagines, the novels of reminiscence have run out. Reading this book one wonders if it does not represent the beginning of a literature of nostalgia, both for the

nostalgia. Peter is one of the ignorant, bigoted elitists who abounded in those days. "You are so lucky to be going to India to find hidden truths", he said. But in fact learns to despise the peoples and cultures through which he moves—the dirty Turk, the shifty Persian. The closer he gets to the East, however, the more appreciable the people become—the Afghans and Tibetans, placid and drugged-to-the-eyeballs, as he sees them.

Peter's ignorance of the history of the countries through which he travels is great. His forays into "philosophy"—the point of his wanderings—are obscure: "To make love in a country is to know its mood delicately, for it is seen in this oil light as a provider of life and the thistle and the boulder strewn mountainside, they appreciated, also—care for it own." But whatever other effect the placid and "caring" East has on these Westerners there is no doubt that they jump to the front of the doctor's queue of "natives" when they become ill.

Ryan's style of writing is dense. Many of his sentences are overloaded to the point of bursting and his punctuation is often an obstacle course for the reader. One misspelling is particularly ironic because of their "intellectual links"—our heroes see themselves as "privileged [sic] products of privileged societies". The publishers have further aided and abetted the author by accepting a very low standard of production.

## Staying in touch

Alannah Hopkin

MARIAN SCHWARTZ

Realities  
337pp. Plakus. £6.95.  
0 86188 156 7

The idea behind *Realities* is very simple: the entire novel consists of letters, that Jennifer Weaver writes to her dead husband Richard while she and her two small children adjust to their new life in California. The device works well: *Realities* is an intricate and satisfying novel. Its simple, unadorned story acquires a force which extends beyond the heroine's personal concerns, to comment on the larger, question of shifting values in American family life.

We hear in the first few pages how Richard, a model husband and father

with a model family, put his desk in order late one Thursday night and, while Jenny and the children were sleeping, went into his oak-paneled garage and appraised himself with fumes from his Mercedes. Over a year later, as Jenny writes her dispassionate account of the incident, she is as puzzled as the reader about the motive for his suicide.

During the next months she writes compulsively—night after night, describing for Richard the details of her new life, forcing herself to go back and re-examine their marriage to find out what went wrong. As we follow Jenny's adjustments to her job in an old people's home, her battles with her unreliable car, her tentative new friendships and all the strains of coping as a young widow, we learn at the same time about Richard and the very different stresses and strains of her previous life.

The restraints imposed on the narrative by the realistic use of the letter form give the novel an unusual tone. There is a chilling intimacy about the "matrimonial fights" and descriptions of Jenny's rare sexual adventures are prefaced by such remarks as "I realise that I haven't given you much preparation for what I am about to say, but I honestly can't think of a tactful approach." But the risks Marian Schwartz has taken pay off, and this is an impressive first novel.

*Greasepaint and Ghosts*, edited by Peter Haining  
Kimber. £5.95. 0 2183 0378 4; an anthology of "Strange and Supernatural stories from the world of Theatre". Includes tales by Abraham Lincoln, Bram Stoker, Sarah Bernhardt, Orion Welles.

## Note on the Language Riots in Tamil Nadu, 1967

"They poured kerosene over their own bodies And sat them on fire. No, there was no end to their spring of anger. Gelled in a rage."

They made a mighty image of a Hindi-speaker. From wire and scolding. Wholed it through the shouting streets, gave it a slipper-whacking."

Kevin Crossley-Holland

## Heirs to the dream

Carol Rumens

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228pp. The Women's Press. £2.95.  
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295pp. The Women's Press. £3.50.  
0 7043 3882 3

These three books are difficult in that, to varying degrees, they presuppose a certain special awareness on the part of their readers; they are also, at best, strong and passionately visionary places of prose with a quality of the epic poem. They are heirs to the dream of Martin Luther King, and are at the same time committed and coolly disinterested concerning its progress. The feminism of both writers is the source of their detachment; although the question of racial equality is primary, it is focused through, and to some extent even diminished by, the often more urgent personal quest for sexual justice. This is particularly true of the two books by Alice Walker. Her deepest concern is with individuals and how their relationships are affected by their confrontations with a wider political and moral issues. The sexism inherent in historical racism and still belabouring most attempts at honest radicalism is neatly teased out and laid bare.

*Meridian* is the most accessible of the three, and the most plural in its concerns. Meridian herself is a bright black girl whose sex education amounts solely to the exhortation regularly delivered by her mother before she goes out on a date, to "be sweet". An euphemism easily misinterpreted as "be compliant", she is surprised, she becomes pregnant. She marries the child's father, but, by the time she is seventeen, the marriage is over. Her political education takes place via television, and turns into commitment after a news item showing the bombing of a house used by young civil rights workers. Meridian (once the movement) relinquishes her child and

takes up a scholarship to Saxon College. Thus her author sots her on a course in which, undramatically and painfully, she must learn to balance the demands of love (an on-off affair with a weak but well-meaning character, Truman Held) and the larger demands of her dedication to her people.

The adult Meridian is selfless, dour, undernourished and rather humorless. Rostling an urge to glorification, Walker has created a convincing, modern, secular saint whose physical survival and subsequent collapse nevertheless a kind of spiritual journey. A further moral dimension is added to the book by the character of Lynno Rabinowitz, a fellow civil rights worker, Jewish, white and therefore a racial outsider in the black community. A moving portrait of this soft, easily compromised, rather aesthetic personality whose vulnerability (she is a Meridian to Meridian's tough, practical strength, testifies to the breadth of the writer's humanism. The narrative itself is solidly constructed and makes powerful use of symbolism in a manner reminiscent of Toni Morrison.

The short stories by the same author, *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*, tend to be less subtly imagined. Often ruggedly open-ended in form, they suggest that Alice Walker is happier with a larger canvas. Some seem rather detached and essay-like; "Coming Apart", for example, is a kind of polemical fable that originally served as an introduction to a section in the volume of essays on pornography *Take Back the Night*. In the best of them, as in *Meridian*, considerations of sexual and racial politics are resonant with universal moral overtones. There is the question posed by Luna, for example, a white sympathizer whose problem is "whether to live in a black community surrounded by whites with a history of lynching blacks, she had a right to scream as Freddie Prye was raping her." Walker has a particular gift for capturing the pathos of sexual love; it is the subject of "Laurel", a story of a black-white triangle in which colour, however, plays only a minimal part. "You are so sexy you make me ache—it is only because you are black that I would be racist but because when you are in the same room as me, the room is full of colour and scent and I am alive," writes Laurel to his married girl-friend. Walker's work should be

admired in a similar spirit not because it represents a flowering of black or female consciousness, but because it best brings to life the varied scents and colours of human experience.

In some ways *The Salt Eaters*, by Walker's contemporary Toni Cade Bambara, is the most ambitious of these three books. Its narrative, jumping from flash-back to flash-back, during which the heroine, Velma Henry, spiritually exhausted by her political struggles, is undergoing a healing at the Southwest Community Infirmary by the medium Minnie Ransom. It is a rather introverted and convoluted performance, making even fewer concessions than Alice Walker to the uninitiated. Stretches of somewhat bucolic dialogue between Minnie and her sluttishly earthy spirit-guide betray the writer's tendency to over-mythologize her grass-roots characters. A long-drawn-out description of a political meeting slows down the earlier pages of the narrative, though there are some sharp satirical touches, as in an aside about "the old CP women who'd gotten over in the forties with 'a negro woman worker I feel'". Overall, it seems almost to be aiming at fellow-workers rather than the general reader; a pity, because the writing has the kind of expressive power that could be used to communicate more widely. Like *Meridian* it is a hymn to individual courage, a sombre message of hope that has confronted the late twentieth-century pathology of racist violence and is still able to articulate its faith in "the dream".

"They poured kerosene over their own bodies And sat them on fire. No, there was no end to their spring of anger. Gelled in a rage."

They made a mighty image of a Hindi-speaker. From wire and scolding. Wholed it through the shouting streets, gave it a slipper-whacking."

Kevin Crossley-Holland

FICTION

## She into space

David Montrose

AMANDA HEMINGWAY

Psyche  
255pp. Faber. £7.95.  
0 571 11875 5

Thanks to William Burroughs, Kurt Vonnegut, and Doris Lessing, among others, readers are becoming accustomed to the (occasionally dubious) distinction between SF writers and those who utilize SF forms. Amanda Hemingway's first novel aims for the latter category.

The opening chapter introduces its eponymous heroine: a beautiful young woman living an ivory tower existence on a barren planet for distant in time and space. Psyche's fellow tower-dwellers—the only people she has encountered since in fancy—are Doctor Corzini, her reclusive father, and Golora, an authentic dumb waiter (Psyche has been educated by computer). Into this closed society comes Psyche's sister, Thoe, unborn when the Doctor rejected his wife and the world. For the first time, Psyche experiences emotions, a personal relationship; even saying "good morning" requires practice.

To this point, the novel is somewhat reminiscent of Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains*—though Hemingway does not have Carter's lush style—and seems set to chronicle Psyche's domestic conditioning. This expectation—supported by the title, the dust jacket notes, even the picture on the cover—is

thoroughly confounded by a rapid shift into space opera.

Carter's novel owed much to the mainstream SF of John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids*; Psyche draws on older models: the Challenger stories of Conan Doyle, Rider Haggard's romances, Buck Rogers serials. We have a lost city, fabulous treasure in the form of mineral deposits, multiple murders, a Napoleon of interplanetary crime, even an absent-minded professor of archaeology. The civilized universe is endangered.

"You must listen," said Calath, for the fourth or fifth time. "The issue is not just one of money or even of crime. Mammonite reserves form the basis for the economies of all the galactic superpowers. The wealth of a planet can be measured in a single crystal. Our hidden puppeteer is not dealing in platinum or wildcat gold; he is dealing in governments and spacefleets, in empires and men. The souls of presidents will be his small change. The balance of power will be his plaything. We must stop that, at any cost."

Psyche is relegated to a sub-plot, her subsequent largely consisting of unsuccessful assaults on her virginity. Matters eventually resolve themselves into a happy ending. The arch-villain, discomfited, succumbs to heart-failure; Psyche has her virginity intact, and she and Thoe find true love.

Throughout, suspicions of a spoof was and wane. Certainly Hemingway indulges in some judicious homing-up of the genre: her archaeologist, for instance, has previously discovered a Hidden City, a Lost City, and a

Forgotten City, and confuses memories of the three. The send-ups, though, are too widely dispersed to be the whole point. Elsewhere, the novel seems to ask for serious consideration. At times, it is difficult to oblige. Especially in the later stages, where Psyche and Thoe, together with the brave companions who have assembled about them, escape in the nick of time from a planet about to explode. The episode might have worked had some parodic perspective defused the cliché—recognized as such even in Kingsley Amis's beloved Golden Age—but, if there is any humour in Hemingway's presentation, it is so deadpan as to be invisible.

Hemingway is attempting to have her stylistic cake and eat it, producing an adventure yarn that pre-empt criticism by poking periodic fun at its own creaky conventions. This is more demanding a form than it appears, and one handled unconvincingly here: the author has little flair for suspense, while the comedy—for which she does have a feel—occurs too infrequently.

Amanda Hemingway was acknowledged as promising on the evidence of her story, "The Alchemist", in Faber's *Introduction 7*. The larger testimony of *Psyche* reveals that she is, as yet, stylistically immature—she habitually coo prose tends to overhear into melodrama when a rise in temperature is required—and lacks the experience to disguise her limitations. But there are inklings of ability. Until we can see what her second novel holds, it would be prudent to consider this one a false start.

The six central characters of *A Killing Frost* share a sense of impotence and frustration. Simon and Anita Silverman have a tense and unsatisfying marriage, and Simon, his creative drive repressed, has just quixotically resigned his teaching post at an art school to devote his final years to painting. Sergeant Mason is taking a weekend of army leave in order to avenge his sister who has drowned herself after being abandoned, six months pregnant, by her married lover, while Ambrose Calvin, a hack novelist, has finally written a satisfying book and been offered a fortune for the film rights but only on condition that his masterpiece be rewritten and vulgarized (his *noni de plume*).

This, as it turns out, is premature. While Boycester guzzles and swills, the proof of the front page lies uncorrected in his office. And it is Camina who, invigorated by a different Rosenberg dream, passes it for press. This last is a splendidly funny scene in which Franks (who is currently working as a journalist on *The Times*) amply demonstrates that, given a free hand, GutTech can match anything that NewTech has to offer in the way of language-mangling.

In general, though, Franks sees technological change in loss ribald terms. Despite its skilful deployment of well-tried satirical techniques, the novel is sharply satirical in tone; there is a sting in every paragraph. Cold type, runs the message, puts down a smokescreen of jargon behind which the enemy—the exploiters, the manipulators, the self-serving—overrun our positions, clearing the trenches of the Rosenbergs and their allies. Well, maybe; but disagreement with this thesis should be no bar to enjoyment of the novel. Doffly constructed, wittily written, it is an impressive comic debut. Perhaps, though, Franks should reflect on the old saw that no fictional triumph is over quite as engaging as he fancies himself to be.

At home in *Two Chairmen*, Cathal, soothed by Mick and Maire's under-the-counter poeas, makes rhetorical play with the analogy between NewTech and the Highland Clearances, only to fall finally silent when, brought to court and fined as a result of the nun incident, he sees his coming 1,500-word apothecosis on the front page of the last hot-metal issue. Boycester earns high praise for this at the forewell party thrown in his honour by the NWG grandees. "You put me on trial and it was found not guilty. May God go with you to Holburn," it was like a father giving

his son out LBW at the parents' cricket match.

As for the journalists, Boycester, the editor, grotesquely isolated in a self-seem fed by years of vox pop leader-writings, the corrupting flattery of local notabilities (Gross-fodder to a person) and the huge adoring embraces of his rich Westridge-nurtured wife, conjures up fresh triumphs from the glowing crystal VDT screens banked expectantly in the new Holborn offices. Such optimism finds no echo in the hearts of Boycester's reporters Cathal Dwyer and David Camina, the rebel Irishman and the assimilated Jew. Dreams haunt them in *Two Chairmen*, their drab Kilburn lodging-house. The ageing Dwyer sees his vision of freedom incorporated in his creation Flaherty, hero of his sprawling never-to-be-completed play about the Partition, scattered among the lining of his jacket, his office drawer and the editor's pockets ("No! Flaherty as model of Brit oppression"). Camina, in a recurring nightmare, becomes Isaac Rosenberg in the trenches, "the only real war poet not in the officer class"; like Boycester, "the sergeant barking at him had an orange face and a tiny

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Frank Ormsby

## Secret-sharers

T. O. Treadwell

CHRISTOPHER LEACH

A Killing Frost  
234pp. Dent. £7.50.  
0 460 145377

There is an old critical chestnut which holds that all the stories in the literature of the world are reducible to six basic plots. However firmly one rejects this depressing libel on human inventiveness, it must be admitted that certain stock situations recur in fiction with obsessive regularity.

*A Killing Frost* has its central device one of the hoariest of the storyteller's stocks-in-trade—what might be called the "strangers in a likeboat" motif. In Christopher Leach's version, six ordinary people, sharers by chance of the same commuter railway carriage, are caught in the grip of an appalling blizzard which birches their train and cuts them off absolutely from the sustaining machinery of the modern world. It turns out, of course, that the six strangers are not in fact as ordinary as all that; each of them is for one reason or another at a point of personal crisis, and the resolution of these crises is the novel's principal theme.

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# Renaissance routines

Henry Woudhuysen

PATRICK CULLEN and THOMAS P. ROCHE  
Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual II

245pp. University of Pittsburgh Press, £17.50, 0 8229 3408 n

The second volume of *Spenser Studies* maintains the high standard of contributions set by the first (reviewed in TLS May 8, 1981). It contains twelve essays, all but one by American and Canadian academics, on "Spenser scholarship and criticism and related Renaissance subjects". Four pieces on *The Shepherd's Calendar* are followed by two on *The Faerie Queene*, one each on the "infamously" *Daphnia*, *The Ruines of Rome*, and the *Ruines of Rome*, and finally accounts of three relatively little-known poems: "The Phoenix and the Turtle", Drummmond's *The Hecate of Son* and Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia and Amphilanthus*.

Probably the best and most scholarly piece in the collection is the first, R. S. Lyubsky's account of the woodcuts in the *Calendar*, of which Spenser said that Michelangelo could neither "amend the best, nor reprehend the worst". Dr Lyubsky continues her attempt, begun in *Spenser Studies* I, to interpret the woodcuts' meaning and relationship with the poem, by tracing their contemporary sources and analogues, and by examining their ingenuity. Although at times over-ingenious, she is largely convincing in showing how important a part of the satisfying is D. W. Burchmore's essay on the problematic iconography of which he seeks to resolve through relating her appearance and actions to traditional representations of Fortune. W. R. Davis contributes a short and clever account of how the like Guyon's progress through it, while L. A. Mitrane's witty refutes R. B. Bond's view of the *Faerie Queene* as belonging to a "tradition" of attacks on the Elizabethan court. There are

historical interpretations and biographical speculations from L. S. Johnson and W. A. Gram, structural analyses lapsing into numerology from R. T. Eriksen - suggesting Giordano Bruno as the turtle in and behind Shakespeare's poem - and S. L. Severance on Drummmond, and finally a hint of feminism from E. V. Beilitt on Lady Mary Wroth.

All's not so well

Brian Vickers

HOWARD C. COLE

The 'All's Well' Story from Boecaccio to Shakespeare  
145pp. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, £8, 0 252 00883 9

Howard Cole, in studying the sources of *All's Well*, adds to the main source (*Decamerone* III, 9), a fifteenth-century Burgundian chronicle romance and Accolti's *Virginia*. Cole claims that his special contribution lies in considering "the story" as such, not merely in relation to Shakespeare; yet he gives no extended analysis of it in any of its versions, nor does he use the tools - provided by the narratology of Prapp, Bremond, Todorov, Genette and others. Indeed, he seems unable to focus on the narrative for long, constantly digressing into background information, diligently researched but of no relevance to "the story". His previous book was called *A Quest of Inquiry: Some Contexts of Tudor Literature*, and it seems as if the same approach is used here. Sadly, after the quantity of biographical, literary and historical information assembled for the French chronicle and Italian play, Cole is unable to make any claim for Shakespeare's knowledge of them, nor has he applied any wider analytical frame to the story itself.

New Criticism. While Shakespeare used irony for several important structural parallels and contrasts (especially between Petrarch and Parolles), Cole ignores the question of structure (much discussed in recent criticism) to focus on one character, Helena. His discussion of Boecaccio is geared to proving that Gilella, Helena's model, is ironically judged by the story and by its context. But the argument is often forced, as when the narrator of Gilella's story is proved for not having considered the story that followed her own: obviously, Boecaccio's readers enjoy knowledge withheld from his characters. As for Helena, Cole, like so many modern critics - but all the more surprisingly since he has chosen to dedicate a whole book to the story of a resourceful and successful heroine - cannot take virtue, or virtuous characters, at face value, or at the valuation of them given by other characters in the play. Shakespeare could not possibly have been so naive as to imagine a wholly or even mainly good person; some nastier motives must be found. Of Helena's vows to make penance Cole writes "But even here humility is self-enhancing and remorse self-glorifying". As Helena's plans finally succeed Cole's irritation with her spreads to the play, with complaints about the gratuitous complexities of the final scene, and "equally ridiculous scene-squeezing" elsewhere, complaints that come oddly from a critic who has not analysed this narrative in detail, nor concerned himself with dramatic structure.

RELIGION

# Mystic directions

Grace Jantzen

WILLIAM JOHNSTON  
The Mirror Mind: Spirituality and Transformation  
181pp. Collins, £5.95, 0 00 215531 1

William Johnston, a Jesuit professor at Sophia University in Tokyo and well known for his writings on Christian mysticism, was an obvious choice to edit the 1980 Martin D'Arny Memorial Lectures, which form the basis of this book. Their topic was the relationship of Christian spirituality and Eastern mysticism. Johnston begins by discussing the importance of inter-religious dialogue in a shrinking world, and the increasing self-knowledge and self-realization which it can bring. He focuses on a series of themes prominent in writings on Christian spirituality - the role of the body, the importance of silence, the use of Scripture. In each case, insights derived from Buddhism are brought to bear and these themes are given a deeper interpretation for Christian use in the total healing of the personality. As one would expect, Johnston scatters numerous gems on the way, ranging from suggestions for koan-like meditation on Scripture (in a era of Biblical criticism) to comments on the importance of friendship for spiritual healing and enlightenment.

happen if Christians and Buddhists... freely recognize the truth and goodness in one another.

But this blurs the issues. We must recognize the partiality of our own insight, true; yet in so far as that insight is accepted as correct the opposite is not held also to be correct at the same time. For example, if Christians preach belief in God and incarnation and immortality as necessary for salvation, and Buddhists reject these as inhibiting enlightenment, then they do clash, even if not in anger. To be fair, Johnston admits that Buddhism and Christianity have separate identities and cannot simply be merged in mutual admiration: to label a Buddhist an incognito Christian is as insulting and unhelpful as calling a Christian an incognito Buddhist. Nevertheless he accepts too easily that there is shared ground: in his view the bare fact of being unconditionally committed to truth, for example, is something that makes it possible for Christians and Buddhists to "join hands and march forward". But surely this holds only at the most abstract level. Concretely, the theological basis of Christianity is diametrically opposed to the non-theism of a Buddhist perspective. It is very awkward to hold hands while marching in opposite directions and to different drummers; and this would be true even if the ultimate destination were thought somehow to be the same.

He does not state this assumption, but it must underlie his discussion of method and insight, for it would otherwise be absurd to think that Buddhist techniques could help to achieve a Christian goal. For example, in his remarks on breathing, he says that as the technique is perfected in Zen practice, the whole body meditates, one becomes aware of a "cosmic dimension of the body, of one's union with the whole universe" and that this is a way to self-realization. Now it is true that the orthodox tradition in Christianity also stresses breathing in the Jesus prayer; yet it is too quick just to assume that the goals are the same and therefore the techniques will be mutually useful. The Jesus prayer is arguably a recognition of the great distance between Creator and created ("have mercy on me a sinner") and certainly not obviously a means of union with the universe. It is a fundamental betrayal of both Buddhism and Christianity not to make clear distinctions between the Buddhist goal of (non-theistic) enlightenment and the Christian goal of union with God through Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that there cannot be shared characteristics: helping the poor is one, healing of the personality is another. Yet even here we must be careful. Christianity declares that such healing of the personality depends ultimately on "the grace of Another", in Johnston's own words - a notion contrary to Zen - and furthermore it would be hasty to assume before investigation that what counts as healing is the same in each case. Thus such similarities as there are can only be really appreciated when one has first explored and respected the basic differences; only then can we properly assess whether or not particular sorts of experiences are parallel and how useful the techniques of one religion might be to the other. Johnston is commendably concerned that Buddhists and Christians should be on open, friendly terms, ready to learn from one another yet this openness will be superficial unless they also seriously confront their differences.

The book is on the whole well presented, and the few printing errors easily correctable by the reader; but it would take considerable enlightenment to interpret the koan on p149: "while remaining true to its past it would190 A their own yoga..."

# The Mellerio affair

Daniel Karlin

MARK SIEGCHRIST

Rough In Brutal Print: The Legal Sources of Browning's 'Red Cotton Night-Cap Country'  
187pp. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, \$15, 0 8142 0322 2

*Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, one of the finest of Browning's late works (and axiomatically one of the least regarded) is based on a juicy scandal among the *haute bourgeoisie* of nineteenth-century Paris, a scandal with all the classic ingredients: sex, religion, and money. Antonio Mellerio, dissolute heir to one of the richest jewellery firms in Paris (still established in the Rue de la Paix) lived with his mistress, Sophie Debaecker, at the family "chateau", Thillerville, near St Aubin in Normandy. The death of his mother, and the attendant reproaches of his relatives and the Church, precipitated in Antonio a crisis of remorse, with gruesome results: he thrust his hands, holding a basket of Sophie's letters, into the fire, shouting "Burn! burn! purify my past!" It was purified with a total eclipse: Antonio was followed by a total eclipse; Antonio went back to Sophie (his relatives were later to accuse her of kidnapping him in the atrocity) and the couple returned to Thillerville. Antonio having sold his share of the jewellery business to his relatives. At Thillerville Antonio's behaviour was certainly

eccentric: according to one story, he "burrowed" a lamb from a local shepherd and took it home with him; he gave it a "bath of purification", he told the shepherd, "and now it is the 'Agnus Dei'". In 1870 Antonio died by a fall from the top of the tower or "Belfriere" which was one of his most conspicuously vulgar "improvements" to the property.

The scandal broke in full force because of Antonio's will. He left Thillerville to a local religious foundation, the convent of "Notre Marie de la Délivrance", reserving, however, a life-interest for Sophie. The family alleged that the convent taken advantage of Antonio's mental infirmity, the ultimate proof of which was, of course, his having committed suicide. They brought suit against the sacred and profane love machine; by a rich historical irony, the hearing of this case of private folly, greed and hypocrisy was interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war (one of the chief witnesses for the plaintiffs, the family doctor who had treated Antonio after his self-mutilation, was killed by the Communards at the Fort de Neuilly), but the family eventually lost the case, appended, lost again, and were finally and severely - as judged by the Court de Cassation. The press and lawyers of the case, reproduced in excellent-sounding translations in Mark Siegchrist's book, gave the kind of fascinating glimpse of the underworld of rich respectability which we expect nowadays from Texas; and it is here, in

the florid irony of the journalism, the ornate rhetoric of the opposing counsel, and the magisterial shrewdness of the judgments, that the real interest of his book lies.

In relation to the poem which Browning made of the events, the book is less successful. Siegchrist easily demonstrates that Browning's claim that his story "is no more nor less than a mere account treated poetically, of certain problematic facts taken just as I find them" is quite false; that Browning comprehensively misrepresented the essential features of the case, taking as facts, for example, some of the wild allegations of Mellerio's relatives about the conduct of the Convent and Sophie, allegations which were conclusively disproved in court. But as far back as *Porcelain* (1835) Browning had been making disingenuous statements about the historical authenticity of his work. Siegchrist somehow compromised by being shown to be inaccurate in his use of fact. But the real interest of the book is perception is precisely the subject of events in their ordered and classified sequence with the truth of creativity, destroying and re-making times and categories. The form of the poem, with which Siegchrist fails adequately to come to grips, shows that Browning knew perfectly well what he was about. He was practising "New Journalism" (else) with his time (in this as in so much irony). Both his poem and Siegchrist's book deserve to be read; but not one in the light of the other.

When it comes to the core of his study, Shakespeare's use of Boecaccio, Cole's fascination with irony, satiric undercutting, deflation, reveals his debt to the supposedly superseded

The final impression of this book (which has been very poorly proof-read) is that it is tetchy and dissatisfied, as if the play had not lived up to the critic's aesthetic or ethic.

# Returning spirally

Stanley Weintraub

DANIEL MARK FOGEL

Henry James and the Structure of the Romantic Imagination  
193pp. Louisiana State University Press, £10.80, 0 8071 0789 1

Despite Henry James's often elliptical prose, and his periodic sentences with their anonymous capacity for qualification, it is clear that antithesis and its resolution were often a fulcrum of his fiction. To demonstrate yet again his centrality to James's art is to do little more than re-state the premise that he was in careful control of his pen. Daniel Mark Fogel offers this surprising finding in a vaguely titled study which has less to do with "the structure of the Romantic

Imagination" - notwithstanding allusions to the literary legacy of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, and Keats - than with the concept of "spiral return", a plot variant of moving "full circle".

Much is made here of the "affinity of James's imagination for the Romantic dialectic of spiral return", a pattern, in the terms of Fogel's mentor M. H. Abrams, in which ideas "inevitably move out of themselves to the extremes of their own antitheses, only to return into themselves on a higher level". Since Fogel acknowledges also that his thesis about James's use of the reconciliation of opposites "expands a widely shared idea about James" (he avow identifies the relevant earlier critics), one may reasonably question the need for this book.

If nothing else, the Fogel formula offers intelligent and persuasive readings of the last major novels *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* - and shows their structural relationships to some of James's early fiction, bearing out the author's own suggestions about the design of his work. To the earlier *The American* we observe the principal character, Christopher Newman, announcing the circularity of at least one of his experiences with "I'm going back to where I began. I am back there. I have been all around the circle." In the later *Golden Bowl*, James furnishes a literal spiral; in having Adam Verver reach a level of awareness of himself "that affected him as changing by a mere revolution of the screw his whole intellectual phase".

Not satisfied with demonstrating selectively the validity of his formula, Fogel concludes with a biographical parallel - that James's post-1895 "recovery of his powers of affirmation following the dark middle period gives his career itself the form of an ascending spiral". This illustration is romantic in the lower-case sense, and useless. And although it is possible to conceive (in Blakean terms) a marriage of contraries and a pattern of "spiral" circularity as essentials of both structure and theme in some Jamesian novels, stories from *Roderick Hudson* at the beginning to *The Golden Bowl* at the end, it would be a Procrustean exercise indeed to fit Fogel's critical scheme to the facts of a long lifetime of Jamesian fiction.

*Critical Essays on Hart Crane* (280pp., Boston: G. K. Hall, 0 8161 3380 5), edited by David R. Gorham, B. Munson, Allen Tate, David R. Clark on *White Buildings* Cowley, Yvor Winters, Vivian H. Frank, Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., L. S. Dembo, Mary Jean Butts and Karl T. Piehl on *The Bridge*.

# Visionary bankers

Lachlan Mackinnon

CAROLYN PORTER

Scaling and Being: The Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and Faulkner  
339pp. New York: Wesleyan University Press, \$29.95, 0 8195 5054 X

Carolyn Porter has produced a powerful, broadly Marxist attempt to deny American literature the Adamic innocence to which it has often seemed to aspire. She employs Lukács's concept of reification to argue that subjects, writers ostensibly withdrawn from history (with the exception of Faulkner), were in fact necessarily implicated in and marked by their times. The history which concerns her is that of the growth of capitalism, with its consequent dehumanizing effects.

Emerson is set against a background of massive industrial growth, and Porter argues that the ambiguity of the "transparent eyeball", the subject which tries to become its own object,

is, as it were, inscribed in the capitalist structure from which it struggles to differ. It must be stressed that her approach owes much to Raymond Williams and nothing to Althusser: the structures with which she deals are fluid hegemonies, not the omnipotent fields of structural theory. For Porter, the visionary poet seems to recapitulate the activity of the banker, manipulate the rules - of commerce, of history, of nature - by which he is himself bound. This argument is interesting when applied to Emerson, but when turned on Henry James it becomes dangerously reductive.

*The Golden Bowl* is diminished to economic allegory, the Prince being a commodity who sells his exchange value to recover his use value. Maggie is the visionary poet who must endure the practical consequences of her undeniable vision - Thoreau to her own Emerson. This humiliation of the Porters' treatment of Faulkner; *As I Lay Dying* becomes another study in visionary poetics, this time with Supten as seer. The reader himself is drawn into the human, active world

of talk to which Supten too must submit. Faulkner's career of narrative development is seen to constitute a search for such an entanglement of the reader, a will to involve him in the novel as though it were history; with Supten, Faulkner creates a truly thm a regional figure, to whom the reader must react as to his model.

It is a great pity that Porter so mistrusts fiction's autonomy that she has to reduce it wholly to the condition of speech-act resistant to the flow of seam-less generous. When dealing with a book which does approach that condition, *The Education of Henry Adams*, she writes very well indeed. Her account of the way in which *The Education* refuses to be a memoir or the one hand or a novel on the other (she points to Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* as just such a novel) shows that Adams's self-centering is not Emersonian division carried to its logical extreme. The second part of *The Education*, the attempt to draw conclusions; lapses into uncertainty and incoherence precisely because all it

can say is that the Henry Adams of the first part must have been subject to the laws he is to discover. "The narrative chronicles accelerating and aerobicic forces while the dynamic theory, verified, dictates impotent submission."

This is not an easy book to read. The Marxist terminology is often repugnant, and the over-generalized references to Halsey's uncertainty, multiple ser scientiam of the worst kind. However, the book's interest is more than sectarian, and its challenge to critics of American literature is considerable.

# Fifty years on: space travel

The TLS of June 16, 1932 carried the following review by C. Hargr of *The Conquest of Space* by David Laaser:

We hope Jules Verne's spirit will read this book. For the second part of its three parts, the only fictitious part, pages 127-174, is Verne's "Voyage to the Moon" as Verne would have written it with sixty-six years' additional science. The weakest point of Verne's story was that the shock of starting from the huge cannon would certainly have killed every one inside the projectile, despite Michael Ardao's water-buffet. Mr Laaser's travellers have no cannon, but a step-rocket. The necessary seven-miles-a-second speed is gained by steps. Each second adds 100 feet per second to the speed, and the used-up rocket drops off. Even so, the effects of the rapid increase of speed during the first eight minutes are described as all but unbearable.

But the voyage to the moon, exciting as it is, is not the primary object of the book, which is the first English book on rockets. The "Conquest of Space" by rockets must begin with parts of space moon-trip is barely possible, but not likely to be attempted till a fuel is discovered more efficient than the present best, which is liquid hydrocarbon rocket. The present cost of a rocket to the moon would be about £20,000,000. Two battleships might be sent far that (and might sink each other with all hands). Hardly any student of the subject expects to reach the moon in less than twenty more years' experiments and failures. Navigation, like navigation, must be done with small things. But between

surface is a sphere in which rocket flights may very soon yield valuable knowledge and a speedier transit than any yet known. Although the Chinese used rockets in war in AD 1200, and rockets have saved life from wrecks for nearly a hundred years, it is only since about 1927, when R. Esnault-Pelterie published "Astronautics", that real advance has been made towards the use of rockets above all other range. The boldly named American Interplanetary Society, of which the author is president, was founded in 1930. A similar German society has 1,000 members, and France has a Committee for Astronautics. The cause has already one martyr, Herr Max Valier, killed in 1930 by an explosion in his 50 hp rocket-motor, which weighed only seven pounds. This book is dedicated to him.

For a flight from Berlin to New York by rocket, through the thin air 30 miles up, at present 52 tons of fuel would be needed for each ton of load; but Mr Laaser thinks this so near economic possibility that he devotes part of his last chapter to a description of, by probable rocket-port on Long Island in 1950. Much sooner than that, we may expect results from Dr Goddard's weather-rocket station at Roswell, New Mexico, financed by the Guggenheim £20,000 gift. Frustrations set up by rocket will come down near; those set up by balloon, even if they rise as far, often come down far off and are lost. New knowledge may be gained on the Heavenside Layer and on the question why wireless reception was worse in 1928-30 than it was in 1923-26. We may also find whether the short and highly penetrative "cosmic rays", from which our atmosphere is supposed to shield us partly, are a real

waste product of the building of the more complex atoms, they have been assumed of causing old age by breaking up the atoms in our bodies. But M. Picard, ten miles up in 1931, felt no harm from them.

The idea of rocket-flight is simple, and has occurred to novelists. Cyrano in 1640 sent his voyagers to the moon in a box propelled by rockets. Verne in 1866 used them to check the fall to the moon. But it is not so simple to practice. The shell must be light, yet must stand enormous pressures and contrasts of heat. Steel is too brittle at very low temperatures. Liquid hydrogen at -253deg C must be close to a combustion chamber at +2,500deg C. In that combustion chamber the pressure must be high, and yet fuel must be pumped in. Small meteors may pierce the shell - big ones smash it. In the moon-trip passengers will find themselves weightless, and no one knows how the human heart will work then. A slight mistake in steering may turn the rocket into a permanent satellite. The fuel difficulty might be solved, as regards heat units, by atomic hydrogen; but no known material could stand the 18,000deg C it would generate. Atomic disintegration, if complete, would yield 18,000 million times as much energy as the burning of the same weight, but no one knows whether the released energy would take a form we could utilize in a rocket or at all. There are places which need no fuel, but so far only in the form of speculation by novelists. The Weilsian Cavorite, which cut off gravitation, is difficult to imagine possible; but it is conceivable that a rocket-shell might be polarized in such a way that the earth would repel it, as to J. J. Astor's moon-story of

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